



CFPN® Certification: Eligibility and Maintenance Requirement Rationales

The CFPN® credential is designed for early-career perioperative nurses seeking to demonstrate their foundational knowledge and clinical readiness in the operating room. Eligibility requirements are structured to reflect the needs of novice practitioners while maintaining integrity, fairness, and alignment with certification standards. Below is a summary of each eligibility requirement and the rationale behind it.

Initial Certification

- Hold a current, unrestricted RN license

Confirms the candidate meets the legal and professional standards to practice as a registered nurse, including successful completion of the NCLEX and an accredited nursing program.

Restricted licenses do not meet the requirement for independent practice.

- Completion of a perioperative orientation program with didactic and clinical components

Ensures candidates have received both academic instruction and hands-on clinical experience relevant to perioperative nursing. This prepares them with the foundational skills needed to begin independent practice. For audited or facility-based programs, submission of a syllabus ensures content alignment.

- Apply within 23 months of initial hire in the operating room

Designed to ensure the candidate is still within the early stages of practice. Submitting an application within this window ensures alignment with the credential's focus on foundational, not advanced, competency.

- Earn the credential before reaching 24 months of perioperative experience

Prevents individuals who have advanced beyond entry-level practice from obtaining a credential meant to validate early-stage knowledge. Supports appropriate test use and maintains validity by ensuring certificants are within the intended population.

- Currently working in perioperative nursing (clinical, education, administration, or research)

Demonstrates continued engagement with perioperative nursing practice, reinforcing knowledge retention and skill application.

CFPN® 1-Year Extension

- Hold an active CFPN® certification

Ensures that individuals pursuing an extension have already met initial eligibility requirements and passed the certification exam.

- Currently working in perioperative nursing

Ongoing practice ensures continued relevance and engagement in the field. Accepts diverse roles within perioperative settings.

- Rationale for the 1-Year Extension

The extension provides additional time for those whose work schedules or clinical volume may have limited their ability to complete the required hours in the standard two-year timeframe. This supports fairness without lowering the standard for certification.