

Questions and answers about requirements for first assisting:

Education requirements for APRN first assistants

Question: Does an APRN who is practicing as a first assistant at surgery prior to January 1, 2016 need to complete a RNFA program in order to continue to practice as a first assistant?

Answer: No; the quotation below from the position statement below does not apply to the APRN functioning in the role prior to January 1, 2016. APRNs new to the first assistant role after January 1, 2016, however, are required to successfully complete a formal RNFA program that meets the AORN Standards for RN First Assistant Education Programs.

“is required, as of January 1, 2016, to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to provide safe, competent surgical first assistant services by completing a program that covers the content of the AORN Standards for RN First Assistant Education Programs, which may be a stand-alone program or may be a portion of a graduate or postgraduate program (eg, additional coursework included in a graduate APRN program);”

References:

AORN Position Statement on Advanced Practice Registered Nurses in the Perioperative Environment. <https://www.aorn.org/-/media/aorn/guidelines/position-statements/posstat-rnfa-advanced-practice-rn.pdf?la=en&hash=3BAF0407822277342F47F0C93B0B23262007B91> . Accessed July 17, 2015.

Qualification Requirements for the RNFA

Question: Does an RNFA who is practicing prior to January 1, 2020 need a baccalaureate degree in order to continue to practice?

Answer: The quotation below from the position statement is intended to apply to only the person who is not functioning in the role by January 1, 2020 and does not apply to those who are already functioning in that role.

“Effective January 1, 2020 the education level for entry into an RNFA program and, subsequently, RNFA practice will be the baccalaureate degree.”

AORN recommends that RNs who were practicing as RNFAs prior to January 1, 2020 and do not have a baccalaureate degree be permitted to continue to practice as RNFAs. Anyone who wants to begin practicing as an RNFA after January 1, 2020 should hold a baccalaureate degree.

References

AORN's Position Statement on RN First Assistants. <https://www.aorn.org/-/media/aorn/guidelines/position-statements/posstat-rnfa.pdf?la=en&hash=9B4A21A4C3FB448B32D67C972E47BFB8BADF710E> . Accessed July 20, 2018.

Education Requirements for the RNFA

Question: Do I need a bachelors in nursing to become an RNFA?

Answer: The baccalaureate degree referred to in the quotation from the position statement below may be a degree in any field and does not have to be a nursing degree.

“Effective January 1, 2020 the education level for entry into an RNFA program and, subsequently, RNFA practice will be the baccalaureate degree.”

References

AORN’s Position Statement on RN First Assistants. <https://www.aorn.org/-/media/aorn/guidelines/position-statements/posstat-rnfa.pdf?la=en&hash=9B4A21A4C3FB448B32D67C972E47BFB8BADF710E> . Accessed July 20, 2018.

Degree requirements for entrance to a RNFA program

Question: Do I need to have a baccalaureate degree prior to enrollment in a RNFA program if I will not complete the RNFA program until after January 1, 2020?

Answer:

The position statement states: *“Effective January 1, 2020 the education level for entry into an RNFA program and, subsequently, RNFA practice will be the baccalaureate degree.”*

AORN recommends that as of January 1, 2020, RNFA education programs require the student to have a baccalaureate prior to entry to the program. If your state and/or your facility adhere to the AORN Position Statement you may not be able to practice as a RNFA after completing your RNFA program without a baccalaureate degree, even though the degree was not a requirement at the time you began the program.

References

AORN’s Position Statement on RN First Assistants <https://www.aorn.org/-/media/aorn/guidelines/position-statements/posstat-rnfa.pdf?la=en&hash=9B4A21A4C3FB448B32D67C972E47BFB8BADF710E> . Accessed July 20, 2018.