



CSA

Candidate Handbook 2021 1st Edition

The National Commission for the Certification of Surgical Assistants (NCCSA)
National Examination for the **Certified Surgical Assistant**



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Section 1

Welcome to the NCCSA.

This candidate handbook is a guide for credentialing candidates of the NCCSA. Candidates are expected to read and understand all information presented. Each candidate is required to sign an acknowledgement of receipt form indicating that the candidate has read and understands all the information presented in this handbook. Deviation from the policies presented in this handbook may be grounds for enrollment review or expulsion.

About the NCCSA

MISSION AND VISION

The mission of the NCCSA is to provide professional certification for surgical assistants, thus promoting quality patient care in the surgical setting.

The vision of the NCCSA is to operate independently in the global community as the essential provider of credentialing services for surgical assistant professionals.

HISTORY AND PURPOSE

Established in 2013 as an independent committee of the National Surgical Assistants, the NCCSA is solely responsible for all decisions regarding certification of surgical assistants; from determining eligibility to maintaining, denying, granting and renewing the designation.

The purpose of the NCCSA is to determine, through examination, if an individual has acquired both theoretical and practical knowledge of surgical assisting. In addition, through the acquisition of continuing education units/credits or through re-examination, all CSAs are required to stay up to date with ongoing changes in the medical field.

PURPOSE OF CERTIFICATION

Certification as a surgical assistant demonstrates that the individual meets the national standard for knowledge that underlies surgical assistant practices. Certified individuals possess mastery of a broad range of skills related to surgical procedures, aseptic technique and patient care.

Because certification is voluntary, the decision to become certified exhibits an individual's pride in the profession, the desire to be recognized for mastery of scientific principles, as well as an ongoing commitment to quality patient care. Certification is a means for upward mobility, a condition for employment, a route to higher pay and a source of recognition nationwide.

Approved candidates who take and pass the CSA examination are authorized to use the initials CSA, as long as they maintain certification currency.

CSA is a federally registered trademark and service mark owned by the NCCSA.



Faculty and Staff



Raylene Erasmus
NCCSA Executive Director

Life

Born in Pretoria, South Africa on November 27, 1970 to a Dutch mother a South African father.
Married in September 1996 to Jacobus Erasmus
Relocated to the USA in March 2002
Became a USA citizen in 2010
Currently living in Woodstock, Georgia with husband and 3 sons.

Education

BComm (Bachelor of Commerce) at University of Pretoria (South Africa) Jan1989-Dec1991
BComm (Hons) majors in Accounting, Business Logistics, and Industrial Psychology at University of South Africa Jan1992-Dec1993
Psychometric Analyst qualified Level A, B, C

Employment:

As Bookkeeper: ITC; Baldwins Steel; Davidsons Fiberglass 1994-2001
Moved to USA March 2002,
As Bookkeeper: WOW Motorcycles (Marietta) 2003-2005
As Credentialing Coordinator and Bookkeeper: NCCSA: Sep 2013-present

Languages spoken:

English proficient and fluent,
Afrikaans proficient and fluent,
Dutch proficient and fluent
German adequate proficiency but not fluent



Holiday and hours of operations

NCCSA holidays

- New Year's Day
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Christmas Day

Hours of operation

The hours of operation, except on NCCSA holidays, is Monday through Friday 9am – 4:30pm EST.



Section Two

Eligibility

ESTABLISHING ELIGIBILITY TO TEST

To become certified, individuals must first establish eligibility to test. This section provides information on all available eligibility options and should be reviewed prior to submitting an examination application and related fees. The NCCSA retains the sole authority to establish eligibility requirements, makes all final decisions regarding examination eligibility and does not refund processing fees or rush processing fees for candidates who apply and are found to be ineligible.

Eligibility Requirements

1. Candidate is a graduate from a Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP) Accredited surgical assisting program. Candidates applying under this eligibility are required to submit one of the following: official notarized letter (on institutional letterhead) from the program director, certificate of completion, or official transcripts.
2. Candidate is a current or previous CSA certificant renewing (must provide evidence of NCCSA certification).
3. Candidate is a graduate from a CAAHEP Accredited surgical assisting program that has had accreditation revoked, rescinded, or failed to renew accreditation. Candidates are eligible to take the CSA examination if the candidate was actively enrolled or graduated from the program at any time it held the appropriate accreditation.
4. Candidate is a graduate from a program undergoing CAAHEP accreditation. Candidate is eligible to take the CSA examination as long as they were actively enrolled when the accreditation site visit occurred and are subsequently eligible upon the official granting of accreditation.
5. Candidate is a Doctor of Medicine/Doctor of Osteopathy.
6. Candidate is a Foreign Medical Graduate (FMG) surgical physician who received a basic medical degree from a medical school located outside the United States and Canada.
 - a. FMGs must have passed Step 1 and Step 2 of the United States Medical Licensing Examination (USMLE), which are the same examinations taken by U.S. and Canadian graduates.
 - b. All applicants who entered the U.S. after the age of 12, have a foreign degree and/or English as a second language are **required** to provide **TOEFL** exam results.

Once you have determined that you are eligible to sit for the examination, submit your application, supporting documentation and testing fees to the NCCSA for processing. Once approved, the NCCSA will send you an Authorization to Test (ATT) letter which includes your ATT number and contact information for the testing agency, so you can schedule your examination.

Scheduling Your Examination

Examination Scheduling

Schroeder Measurement Technologies, Inc. (SMT) administers the CSA examination. SMT assists NCCSA with the certification process through all aspects of test development, test administration and candidate support. They adhere to professional standards and guidelines required in the testing industry. The most important of these standards are promulgated by such key organizations as the American National Standards Institute (ANSI), the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA), the National Council on Measurement in Education (NCME), the American Educational Research Association (AERA), the Council on Licensure, Enforcement and Regulation (CLEAR) and the Institute of Credentialing Excellence (ICE), formerly NOCA. This body of standards provides a means for ensuring that the assessment process is a fair measurement of competence and is legally defensible.



Computer-based Testing

SMT provides computer-based testing (CBT) through their corporate affiliate ISO-Quality Testing, Inc. (IQT). IQT is a test administration company specializing in the delivery of CBT exams that are secure, high quality and user-friendly. IQT can deliver the CSA exam at over 300 sites throughout North America and around the world. The online CSA examination will be given at a testing center most convenient to the candidate's work or home. Candidates should complete the examination scheduling process as soon as they know their personal schedule. The sooner they schedule on-line, the better the availability of a seat at their preferred location.

Exam Scheduling

Once a candidate receives their Examination Receipt/Admission Letter from NCCSA containing their unique User Name and Password for testing, they may schedule an appointment to take the CSA exam

A candidate may schedule an examination appointment online at any time by using the online scheduling service. Navigate the browser to: www.iqttesting.com.

- Select 'Exam Registration'.
- Enter User ID and Password

Candidates should be prepared to confirm a date and location for testing.

Telephone Scheduling

Call ISO Quality Testing at 866-773-1114 to schedule an examination appointment. This toll-free number is answered from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (Eastern Standard Time) Monday through Friday. The examination is administered by appointment only Monday through Saturday at 9:00 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. Individuals are scheduled on a first-come, first-served basis. When the appointment is made, the candidate will be given a time to report to the Testing Center. Candidates must be prepared to present their Examination Receipt/Admission Letter prior to taking the CSA exam. **UNSCHEDULED CANDIDATES (WALK-INS) WILL NOT BE ADMITTED** into a testing center.

Candidates should call to schedule a test as soon as they receive their Examination Receipt/Admission Letter from NCCSA, even if they do not want to test immediately. Candidates must take the examination before the expiration date provided on the Examination Receipt/Admission Letter or forfeit the examination fee.

Examination Day Reporting Time

Candidates will be given a specific reporting time when they schedule the examination. Allow sufficient time to find the testing center and make sure to have all necessary documents before reporting for registration. A candidate who arrives 15 or more minutes after the scheduled testing time will NOT be admitted. Candidates who arrive late are considered absent and forfeit all examination fees paid.

Test Administration

After identification, has been confirmed, the candidate will be assigned to a computer station. Candidates will be allowed four hours to take the examination. Candidates should notify the testing center administrator upon completion of the exam. Scoring of the examination will take place immediately and candidates will receive a preliminary pass/fail report prior to leaving the testing center. Official score reports will arrive from the NSAA within 2 weeks.

Examination Rescheduling

A candidate may reschedule an examination appointment at no charge **ONCE** by calling ISO Quality Testing at 866-773-1114 at least five business days prior to the scheduled testing session. **IMPORTANT:** Failure to show for a scheduled examination appointment will result in forfeiture of total paid testing fees and necessitate reapplying for your examination and resubmission of testing fees.



A candidate who wishes to reschedule his/her examination appointment, but fails to contact ISO Quality Testing at least five business days prior to the scheduled testing session will forfeit the total testing fees and will need to reapply with the NCCSA to get a new Examination Receipt/Admission Letter. Failure to call to cancel an examination will result in loss of testing fees.

Cancellation and Refund Policy

General

Full Refunds:

NCCSA will offer a full refund of all examination funds (excluding admissions fees) in the following instances:

- if a candidate cancels his/her enrollment contract within 72 business hours of enrollment.
- Provides a full refund if the owner or representatives of the NCCSA procured the enrollment because of any misrepresentation in advertising, promotional materials of the organization, or representations.
- NCCSA will provide a full examination refund if the certification is discontinued prior to sitting for the exam.
- A candidate of the NCCSA who cancels their test because of the candidate being called to active duty in a military service of the United States or the National Guard.

Fees:

- NCCSA will charge a processing fee of \$50 for all returned checks.

Administration and Refund Computation:

- All refunds will be totally consummated within 60 days after the effective date of termination.
- The candidate is responsible for purchasing instructional supplies, books, and tools. Once these materials are purchased and received, no refunds are available.
- The effective date of termination for refund purposes will be the earliest of the following:
 - The date the NCCSA notified the candidate of termination.
 - The date of receipt of the written notice from the candidate.

Fee Schedule, and Payment Policy

Payments

Payments are due before the candidate sits for the exam. Once the candidate successfully obtained the certification, the candidate must maintain their certification by meeting the ongoing education requirements and making on-time re-certification payments.

Payments can be made by:

- Paypal
- Check
- Credit Card



- Money order

SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS AND SERVICES

The National Commission for the Certification of Surgical Assisting (NNCCSA) provides reasonable accommodations in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act as amended (ADAAA) for individuals with documented disabilities who demonstrate a need for accommodation(s). In accordance with the ADAAA, the NCCSA does not discriminate against individuals with disabilities in providing access to examination programs.

ADAAA regulations define a person with a disability as someone with a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities such as walking, seeing, hearing or learning. The purpose of accommodations is to provide equal access to NCCSA examinations for all individuals. Accommodations “match up” with the identified functional limitation so that the area of impairment is relieved with an auxiliary aid or an adjustment to the testing procedure. Functional limitation refers to the aspects of a disability that interfere with an individual’s ability to function; that is, what someone cannot do on a regular and continuing basis because of their disability.

The purpose of documentation is to validate that an applicant for test accommodations is covered under the ADAAA as a disabled individual. Comprehensive information by a qualified professional is necessary to allow the NCCSA to understand the nature and extent of the applicant’s disability and the resulting functional impairment that limits access to examinations. Documentation also allows the NCCSA to provide appropriate accommodations for such a disability.

The NCCSA will provide, without cost to the candidate, reasonable accommodations designed to facilitate equal access to its certifying examination for those candidates whose documentation supports such a determination. In no case will accommodations be provided which would compromise the examination’s ability to test accurately the skills and knowledge it professes to measure. Similarly, no auxiliary aid or service will be provided that would fundamentally alter the examination.

ADAAA confidentiality: The NCCSA strictly adheres to a policy of confidentiality and does not disclose names of applicants with disabilities or information concerning the application or accompanying documentation. Examinations administered with accommodations are not identified to third party score recipients and are scored no differently than examinations of other certification candidates. The application and guidelines related to examination accommodations may be found in the back of this Candidate Handbook.

MILITARY APPLICANTS

Military applicants stationed overseas may request to test through their base education center. The base education center can administer a web based examination if the military post is more than 100 miles from a testing center. To utilize a military base education center, applicants must submit a letter with the examination application requesting administration through their base education center. The letter must include the base name, geographic location (base, city, state and country), the testing officer’s name and email, the mailing address and phone number.

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

The NCCSA accepts all properly completed applications from qualified applicants regardless of the applicant’s age, sex, race, religion, marital status, disability or national origin.



Section Three

Candidate Conduct

Code of Conduct

NCCSA seeks to provide a safe and secure environment through a candidate code that respects and protects the rights and welfare of its members, and one that is conducive to the pursuit of education. NCCSA reserves the right to suspend or dismiss candidate for failure to conform to its policies and procedures or for conduct detrimental to the best interest of NCCSA. In exercising this right, NCCSA may subject candidates to disciplinary action or failure to comply with the NCCSA policy.

Candidates may be subject to discipline for any violations of law. Violations of law at the testing facility or NCCSA events will be reported to the appropriate authorities.

The dismissal of criminal charges will not necessarily result in the NCCSA's dismissal of internal charges and sanctions.

Misconduct

Violations of the following code may result in disciplinary action (up to and including dismissal). This list is not intended to be exhaustive and the NCCSA reserves the right to take disciplinary action in any circumstance where it reasonably believes it necessary for the best interest of NCCSA.

- Academic cheating or plagiarism
- Possession of firearms, fireworks, explosives, or any other materials or weapons considered deadly or dangerous
- Furnishing false information to the NCCSA, including forgery, alteration or misuse of NCCSA documents, records, or identification
- Disruptive or disorderly behavior in the testing facility, lab, Operating Room, or clinical environment
- Physical violence or the threat of physical violence
- Sexual harassment
- Stalking
- Assault and/or battery
- Manufacture, possession, sale, or use of controlled or illegal substances, including alcohol unless expressly permitted by NCCSA
- Destruction, damage, or misuse of public or private property
- Illegal entry and/or occupation of NCCSA or testing facility property
- Theft, larceny, embezzlement of public or private property, including issuance of bad checks



- Unauthorized use of computers or software
- Obscene conduct
- Failure to comply with reasonable direction of NCCSA personnel in performing their duties
- Use of the NCCSA name for soliciting funds or other activities without prior permission
- Acting or speaking, including in assembly, on campus which disrupts the normal functions of the NCCSA or its authorized activities
- Consumption of food or drink in prohibited locations
- Smoking in prohibited locations

Reporting misconduct

- Charges for violations of the NCCSA policy may be initiated by a NCCSA member, including faculty, staff, and administrators or by an on-site visitor. Retaliation against the person reporting the violation is strictly forbidden and will result in disciplinary action.
- Policy violations are to be filed in writing in accordance with the grievance and complaint policy.

Harassment Policy

Harassment

The purpose of this policy is to enforce that NCCSA strongly supports the rights of all its candidates to learn and test in an environment free from all forms of harassment, including harassment on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, age, disability, or any other protected category.

- Harassment is verbal or physical conduct that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual because of race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, age, disability, or any other protected category.
- Harassing conduct includes, but is not limited to:
 - Epithets
 - Slurs
 - Negative stereotyping
 - Threatening, intimidating, or hostile acts that relate to the above characteristics

NCCSA prohibits harassment of any kind. Any violation of the NCCSA harassment policy should be reported immediately to either your instructor or academic administrator.



All situations will be treated confidentially to the maximum extent possible and promptly investigated. NCCSA prohibits any form of retaliation against a candidate for filing a bona fide complaint under this policy or for assisting in a complaint investigation. If the results of the investigation indicate that corrective action is called for, such action may include disciplinary measures up to and including immediate termination of enrollment of the offender.

Sexual Harassment

The purpose of this policy is to promote an environment that is free of sexual harassment. Sexual harassment of candidates at NCCSA is unlawful and will not be tolerated by this institute. To achieve our goal of providing a test setting free of sexual harassment, the conduct that is described in this policy will not be tolerated, and we have provided a procedure by which conduct will be dealt with if encountered by candidates.

NCCSA takes allegations of sexual harassment seriously. We will respond promptly to complaints of sexual harassment, and where it is determined that such inappropriate conduct has occurred, we will act promptly to eliminate the conduct and impose such corrective action necessary, including corrective action where appropriate.

Definition of Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is defined as sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

- Submission to, or rejection of such advances, requests or conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of enrollment or
- Such advances, requests, or conduct have the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's performance by creating an intimidating, hostile, humiliating, or sexually offensive environment.

Other sexually oriented conduct, whether it is intended or not, that is unwelcome and has the effect of creating an educational environment that is hostile, offensive, intimidating, or humiliating to male or female candidates may also constitute sexual harassment.

While it is not possible to list all those additional circumstances that may constitute sexual harassment, the following are some examples of conduct, which, if unwelcome, may constitute sexual harassment depending upon the totality of the circumstances, including the severity of the conduct and its pervasiveness:

- Unwelcome sexual advances – whether they involve physical touching or not;
- Sexual epithets, slurs, jokes, written, or oral references to sexual conduct, gossip regarding one's sex life, comments about an individual's body, comments about an individual's sexual activity, deficiencies, or prowess;
- Displaying sexually suggestive objects, pictures, or cartoons;
- Leering, whistling, brushing against the body, sexual gestures, suggestive or insulting comments;
- Sending or circulating, whether in print or electronic form, literature or communications (articles, magazines, or emails) of a sexual nature:
 - Inquiries into one's sexual experiences: and
 - Discussion of one's sexual activities.



All candidates should take special note that, retaliating against an individual who has complained about sexual harassment, and retaliating against individuals for cooperating with an investigation of a sexual harassment complaint is unlawful and will not be tolerated by this institution.

Complaints of Sexual Harassment

If any of our candidates believes that he or she has been subjected to a sexual harassment, the candidate should file a complaint with his or her instructor and/or administrator. This should be done either in writing or verbally. They are available to discuss any concerns you may have and to provide information to you about our policy on sexual harassment and our complaint process. Any instructor who has a reason to suspect harassment is occurring must notify academic administrator.

Sexual Harassment Investigation

When NCCSA receives a complaint, there will be a prompt investigate into the allegation in a fair and expeditious manner. The investigation will be conducted in such a way as to maintain confidentiality to the extent practicable under the circumstances. The investigation will include a private interview with the person filing the complaint and with any witnesses. There will also be an interview of the person alleged to have committed the sexual harassment. When the investigation is completed, NCCSA will, to the extent appropriate as determined by the institute, inform the person filing the complaint and the person alleged to have committed the conduct, the results of the investigation. If it is determined that inappropriate conduct has occurred, the NCCSA will act promptly to eliminate the offending conduct, and where it is appropriate, will also impose disciplinary action up to and including termination of enrollment.

Drug and Alcohol

The purpose of this policy is to help provide a safe and productive testing environment for all candidates. NCCSA has a particular concern about substance abuse, since it can: affect a candidate's productivity and learning; jeopardize the safety of the candidate, fellow candidates, and the public; impair the reputation of NCCSA and its staff; and violate state and federal statutes.

What is prohibited and required of Candidates:

The possession, consumption, purchase, use, or sale of alcohol or drugs during NCCSA testing is prohibited. Furthermore, no candidate shall be under the influence of alcohol or drugs while on NCCSA property.

“Legal Drugs” are those prescribed or over-the-counter drugs that are legally obtained by the candidates and used for the purpose for which they were prescribed and sold.

Even such legal drugs may affect the safety of the candidates, therefore any candidate who is taking any legal drug that may impair safety, performance, or motor function must advise his/her instructor and/or academic administrator before reporting to testing under such medication. If NCCSA determines that such use does not pose any safety or product risk, the candidate will be permitted to continue his/her exam.



“Illegal Drugs” are drugs or controlled substances which are (1) not legally obtainable, or (2) legally obtainable, but not obtained in a lawful manner. Examples include cocaine, marijuana, and prescription drugs that were not lawfully obtained.

Violation of this policy will result in discipline, up to and including termination of enrollment.

Solicitation and Distribution Policy

This will set forth NCCSA’s policy with regards to solicitation and distribution, which may create testing disruptions and encroach on individual rights or personal convictions of candidates. This policy applies to all NCCSA candidates.

Solicitations (for example, collecting dues, selling merchandise, circulating petitions or surveys, etc.) and/or the distribution of literature or other material for solicitation are not permitted by a candidate during his/her time, or at any time by persons who are not candidates without specific authorization by NCCSA.

Nor may any unauthorized information be posted electronically, via email or in print, without the approval of the academic administrator.

Violation of this policy could result in the termination of exam enrollment and/or revocation of certification.

Technology Policy

Cell Phone Policy

The purpose of this policy is to address the usage of cell phones while examining NCCSA. This policy applies to all electronic devices, including cell phones, mobile phones, smart phones, Blackberry’s, pagers, and any other portable communication or data storage devices.

- All stated devices must be turned off or set to silent during all exam rooms, labs, and clinical areas while attending NCCSA.
- No camera or imaging function of any stated devices may be used or activated during testing, labs or clinical areas while attending NCCSA.
- Should an emergency arise, the candidate will be excused from the testing area by the instructor to address this concern.

Information Technology Policy

The purpose of this policy is to define NCCSA’s objectives for establishing specific standards on appropriate business use of NCCSA’s information technology and telecommunications systems and equipment.

NCCSA’s information and telecommunications systems and equipment, including Internet, software, and telecommunications are provided for official and authorized NCCSA business purposes. Any use of such systems and



equipment perceived to be illegal, harassing, offensive, or in violation of other NCCSA policies, standards or guidelines, or any other uses that would reflect adversely on NCCSA, can be considered a violation of this policy.

Candidates must report any suspected, accidental, or intentional action that violates, or may violate this policy, or is otherwise illegal to the academic administrator.

NCCSA has the right to monitor, record, audit, and disclose all communications made on or through NCCSA's equipment or networks to ensure that appropriate business and lawful purposes are being pursued. Use of these systems and equipment constitutes expressed consent by those covered by the scope of this policy to such monitoring, recording, and auditing. Candidates should not have any expectation of privacy when using NCCSA's equipment or networks. All information stored on NCCSA's computers belongs to NCCSA. NCCSA may inspect all such computers and information at any time as necessary for the enforcement of this policy.

NCCSA Internet resources are provided primarily for business use. Limited personal use of NCCSA's Internet resources is acceptable if it does not conflict with NCCSA's business requirements. The use of NCCSA's Internet resources shall be in accordance with applicable laws and regulations. Users shall be accountable for all Internet activity.

Any use of NCCSA's Internet resources must not be illegal and must not be perceived as a conflict of interest. NCCSA's Internet resources shall not be used to link, bookmark, access, download, transmit, or store objectionable material, images, or content such as pornography and/or indecent materials.

NCCSA retains sole discretion to determine what constitutes such materials. NCCSA's Internet resources shall not be used to conduct personal or non-NCCSA solicitations. Participation in any chat groups, electronic bulletin boards, Usenet groups, Weblogs or forums is permitted only when conducting authorized NCCSA business.

Candidates can use only NCCSA's approved versions and configurations of browser software when using NCCSA's Internet resources. Candidates must not adjust the browser security settings to be less restrictive than NCCSA's approved configuration. NCCSA's Internet resources shall not be used to access, download, transmit, or operate any commercial software, shareware, or freeware that has not been authorized by NCCSA.

Candidates shall abide by and comply with all copyright laws pertaining to computer software and by any software license agreements that are legally applicable to them. All software and licenses used by NCCSA must be legally purchased or acquired.

NCCSA telecommunications resources are provided primarily for official and authorized NCCSA business use and purposes. Limited personal use of NCCSA telecommunications resources is acceptable if it does not conflict with NCCSA's interests. The use of the NCCSA's telecommunications resources shall be in accordance with applicable laws and regulations.

Any use of NCCSA telecommunications resources must not be illegal, must not be perceived as a conflict of NCCSA interest, and must not interfere with normal business activities and operations. Users shall not violate any laws or regulations using NCCSA telecommunications resources. NCCSA telecommunications resources shall not be used to access, download, transmit, or store objectionable material, images, or content. NCCSA telecommunications resources



shall not be used to conduct personal or non-NCCSA solicitations. Users shall avoid discussing sensitive or proprietary NCCSA business or information in environments where such information can be disclosed to an unauthorized third party.

All NCCSA fax transmissions require a cover page with a disclaimer statement attached.

Section Four

Academic Policy

Academic Honesty

NCCSA expects all members of its community to act with responsibility. As a certifying body dedicated to the standards of knowledge and the free inquiry after truth, NCCSA strives to maintain the highest standards of academic honesty.

Honesty in the performance of academic assignments is essential to the mastery of a subject and intellectual development. The responsibility for such honesty rests with the individual candidate. To help members of the community recognize academic dishonesty, the definitions are listed:

Cheating

- Cheating is presenting someone else's work as one's own.
- Cheating is knowingly giving, receiving, acquiring, or possessing information to be used for academic evaluation, including tests, term papers, written projects, etc., which has deception as its intent.

Plagiarism

- Plagiarism is the use of exact words, phrases, or sentences of another person without proper documentation.
- Plagiarism is paraphrasing information used by another person (facts, opinions, ideas, or language) without proper documentation.

Examples of Academic Dishonesty

Examples of cheating and plagiarism may include, but are not restricted to the following: submission of a term paper which was downloaded from an Internet resource as one's own work; turning in a written project which includes a paragraph written by another candidate without giving that candidate proper credit within the documentation of the project; copying information from another person's exam; copying a few words or paraphrasing an idea from an article or interview without proper bibliographic citation.

Procedures

Informing the candidate.

The instructor will remind the candidate of the NCCSA's policy on cheating and plagiarism as found in the candidate handbook.

Initiating action in cases of cheating and plagiarism.



- The instructor, upon discovering an incident of cheating or plagiarism, should be prepared to document the case carefully with appropriate and adequate evidence.
- The instructor will confront and personally discuss the alleged dishonesty with the candidate.

Suspicion of Academic Dishonesty

- If the instructor is convinced after this confrontation that the candidate has been academically dishonest, the instructor will inform the candidate of the sanctions for academic dishonesty.
- The instructor is responsible for informing the NCCSA board within 24 hours.
- The minimum penalty is 0 (no credit) for the exam. The maximum penalty is a not being allowed to obtain the certification.
- Upon notification by the instructor, NCCSA will notify the candidate of the appeal process within 24 hours.

Expulsions and Readmissions

The following are non-negotiable reasons for immediate revocation of certification or a zero grade on an examination:

- Cheating
- Negligent or unauthorized use of NCCSA property or the property of any of its affiliates
- Deviation from the assigned topic, guideline, or assignment while representing NCCSA on and off campus
- Sexual harassment, inappropriate conduct as determined by the NCCSA policies and procedures
- HIPAA violations

If a candidate is guilty of any of the above reasons, the candidate will not be eligible to obtain certification with the NCCSA at any time in the future.

COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCE POLICY

External governing bodies

The purpose of this policy is to inform candidates about the process for filing or addressing a complaint about the NCCSA.

It is the policy of NCCSA not to retaliate against any candidate for filing or discussing a concern with an appropriate governing body.

NCCSA

NCCSA provides several avenues for candidates to lodge and resolve grievances and complaints:

- NCCSA encourages direct communication between candidates and NCCSA members to attempt to address complaints/grievances.
- If the candidate believes the situation is detrimental to himself/herself, the candidate should follow the procedure described here for bringing the complaint to the NCCSA's attention.

Candidate Mediation and Grievance Process



Step 1

- Discuss the problem with the instructor. If the candidate does not believe a discussion with the moderator is appropriate, the candidate should proceed directly to Step 2.

Step 2

If the problem is not resolved after discussion with the instructor, or if the candidate thinks a discussion with the moderator is inappropriate, the candidate must complete the NCCSA Candidate Complaint Form, and submit the form to the Grievance and Complaints Committee:

- Online grievance and complaint form. A NCCSA representative will acknowledge an online complaint within 48 hours of submission and explain the resolution procedure.
- Written grievances and complaints. A NCCSA representative will acknowledge a written complaint within 48 hours of receipt of the complaint and explain the resolution procedure.
- A candidate complaint form can be found in the NCCSA Candidate Handbook and online at www.csaexam.net
- All grievances and complaints will be issued a “GC” number that will be communicated to the candidate during initial contact.
- NCCSA will have a Grievance and Complaint meeting where all complaints will be reviewed by the disciplinary action committee.
- An investigation will be conducted with the appropriate personnel.
- Minutes of the Grievance and Complaint meeting will be saved for 24 months.
- NCCSA will contact the candidate with a proposed resolution within one week of the meeting.

Step 3

- Candidates who have a complaint about NCCSA and are unable to resolve their concern through the NCCSA are encouraged to contact an outside governing body.

GRADING POLICY

HIPAA POLICY

HIPAA Objective

The purpose of this policy is to ensure the privacy and maintain confidentiality of all protected health information provided by candidates at NCCSA. Because the NCCSA receives information on candidates and patients from various health care facilities, it is necessary for the NCCSA to be following HIPAA guidelines. The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 is a law that was passed to protect individual’s rights to health insurance coverage and to promote industry standardization.

The major purpose of having a Privacy Rule is to define and limit the circumstances in which an individual’s protected health information (PHI) may be disclosed.



Requirements

This Privacy Rule requires that we use reasonable safeguards to ensure that patients' and candidates' protected health information is not transmitted or disclosed to anyone who does not have a right to know and to ensure the information remains confidential.

Definition of "Protected Health Information"

It is defined as individually identifiable health information (IIHI) specifically about a patient or candidate. It is created or received by a health care provider and relates to the past or present physical or mental health condition of an individual. PHI can be transmitted or maintained by oral discussions, paper documents, personal computers, or any electronic media network including Internet, disks, CD's, USB's, etc. Reasonable safeguards must be practiced ensuring PHI is not transmitted or compromised and remains private and is kept confidential.

Patient Personnel Records

To ensure the privacy and confidentiality of all patients, candidates are required to observe this HIPAA Policy when dealing with patient information during all clinical settings while a candidate at NCCSA. All candidates are required to observe and follow the HIPAA Privacy Policy of any given clinical facility.

Reasonable Safeguards

All candidates of NCCSA handling any form of protected health information (whether it is regarding another candidate or clinical patient) are required to ensure that medical and/or health information remains private and confidential by using the following safeguards:

- Turn computer screens away from public view
- Use passwords or log off computer when leaving workstation and computer unattended
- Shred documents that contain PHI
- Destroy or remove any PHI contained on any electronic media (CD, disks, drives, USB's)
- Do not copy or reproduce any PHI
- Not engaging in conversation or discussions regarding one's PHI with others
- Turning documents face down or covering them if you need to perform other tasks
- Keeping PHI out of public view
- Never forward or send anyone's PHI elsewhere without his or her written consent and permission

Candidate Health Records

To ensure the privacy and confidentiality of all PHI of candidates, NCCSA will maintain all medical related documentation in the candidates' health record file in a secured area located in the admissions office.

Distribution of Privacy Notice

All candidates of NCCSA will receive a copy of this "Privacy Notice" informing them how medical information about them will be used, disclosed, and maintained by the NCCSA.



Confidentiality Agreement

All candidates occupying a position which could allow them access to PHI regarding a patient will sign a “confidentiality agreement” acknowledging that they are familiar with this policy and the Privacy Notice concerning PHI use, disclosure, storage, and destruction as required by HIPAA.

RETESTING

Candidates who are unsuccessful in passing the examination may re-test after thirty (30) days and will receive a SMT score report letter. The SMT score report is an individualized document that shows how a candidate performed in each of the test plan content areas. Candidates who fail the exam can use the score report as a guide to prepare for reexamination. Once NCCSA is in receipt of a retesting fee, a new Examination Receipt/Admission Letter will be issued. Candidates can test three times during any calendar year. Candidates will be required to submit a retake application to receive reauthorization to test.

Military Information

Military applicants stationed overseas may request to test through their base education officer, rather than at one of the established testing centers.

The base education center can administer a web-based examination under the following conditions: if the applicant is stationed outside the United States; if an instructor is testing a group of applicants; if an applicant is testing at sea or if the military post is more than 100 miles from a testing center. NCCSA will mail the test results directly to the testing candidates within six weeks.

To utilize a military base education center, applicants must submit a letter with the examination application, requesting administration through the base education center. The letter must include the base name, geographic location (base and country), the testing officer’s name, mailing address and phone number. All paperwork must be received by NCCSA a minimum of 45 days prior to the requested examination date.

EXAMINATION SECURITY

The NCCSA and SMT maintain examination administration and security standards that are designed to assure that all candidates are provided the same opportunity to demonstrate their abilities. All testing centers are continuously monitored by audio and video surveillance equipment for security purposes. All examination questions are the copyrighted property of the NCCSA. It is forbidden under federal copyright law to copy, reproduce, record, distribute and/or display these examination questions by any means, in whole or in part. Candidates are not permitted to discuss examination contents or remove examination materials from the testing sites at any time. Doing so may subject you to severe civil and criminal penalties.

DENIAL/REVOCATION OF CERTIFICATION POLICY

The NCCSA may consider revocation or denial of certification. Examples of the activities that may cause revocation or denial of certification include, but are not limited to the following:

1. Possession, use or attempt to use altered or falsified certification cards or certificates;
2. Obtaining or attempting to obtain certification or recertification by fraud or deception;
3. Knowingly assisting another to obtain or attempt to obtain certification or recertification by fraud or deception;
4. Unauthorized possession or distribution of examination materials including reproduction of examination questions;
5. Violation of examination rules, including but not limited to, cheating on the examination.



The NCCSA retains the sole authority to amend or repeal its policies regarding denial or revocation of certification at any time including, but not limited to, the authority to add new grounds for denial or revocation and add provisions for suspension of certification.

RIGHT TO APPEAL POLICY

Individuals have the right to appeal decisions made by the NCCSA regarding their certification and/or eligibility for certification and/or recertification. Pass/fail examination scores are not appealable to the Board of Directors and is addressed under the complaint policy.

1. An individual submits a written appeal by mail to the NCCSA Board of Directors with current correspondence associated with the appeal (i.e., examination denial notification) and supporting documentation (i.e., letters of recommendation, proof of graduation) with \$100.00 non-refundable fee.
2. Appeals are heard by the NCCSA Board of Directors at the next scheduled Board meeting.
3. Candidates will be notified by the NCCSA office of the final decision from the Board of Directors. Once a decision has been made by the NCCSA Board of Directors, there is no further appeal process.



Section Five

CONTENT OUTLINE

SURGICAL ASSISTANT CERTIFYING EXAMINATION CONTENT OUTLINE

The content of the examination is based on tasks performed by CSAs nationwide. A job analysis survey was conducted to identify specific tasks related to the frequency and importance of Surgical Assistants nationwide. The results of the job analysis were used to develop the content outline for the examination, which is evaluated on a prescribed schedule to ensure that the overall examination content reflects current surgical assistant practice.

The CSA examination consists of 175 questions, 150 of which are scored. A passing score is 75% and 114 is the minimum number of questions that must be answered correctly. Score reports are provided to all candidates who take the examination upon request.

- I. General Knowledge – 21 scored (3 not scored)
 - a. Apply concepts of anatomy (SG) including:
 - i. Identification of anatomical landmarks
 - b. Apply concepts of physiology including:
 - i. Organ systems
 - ii. Blood and hemodynamics
 - iii. Electrolytes and volume replacement
 - iv. Wound healing (inflammation and repair)
 - v. Airway status
 - c. Apply concepts of pathology including:
 - i. Indications/contraindications for surgery
 - ii. Pathogens in health care
 - iii. Allergic reactions
 - d. Understands the implications of laboratory tests and values.
 - e. Understands pharmacologic agents used in surgery.
 - f. Understands asepsis and microbiology.
- II. Professional Practice – 7 scored (2 not scored)
 - a. Follows Legal Requirements including:
 - i. HIPAA/Patient privacy
 - ii. OSHA requirements
 - b. Understands the CSA Scope of Practice
 - c. Abides by the NSAA Code of Ethics
 - d. Practices infection control, Universal Precautions, and aseptic technique
- III. Equipment & Technology – 14 scored (2 not scored)
 - a. Uses Surgical equipment and instruments.
 - b. Assists with Video Surgery including:
 - i. Arthroscopic
 - ii. Endoscopic
 - iii. Laparoscopic
 - iv. Thoracoscopic
 - c. Assists with Robotic Assisted Surgery.
 - d. Assists with Electrosurgery.
 - e. Assists with Arthroplasty.
 - f. Assists with the implantation of medical devices and grafts.
 - g. Understands the uses of imaging equipment and agents (e.g., ICG, Methylene Blue, Milk)
- IV. Surgical Tasks – 45 scored (10 not scored)
 - a. Reviews history and physical
 - b. Reviews surgical consent
 - c. Moves/positions patients.
 - d. Assess that the correct equipment is available.
 - e. Preps and drapes the surgical site.
 - f. Administers local anesthesia.
 - g. Inserts/removes Foley catheter.
 - h. Applies tourniquets.
 - i. Maintains a clear visualization of the operative site including:
 - i. Placement of retractors
 - ii. Hemostasis



- j. Performs cauterization.
 - k. Dissects, alters, and removes tissue.
 - l. Inserts trocars/ports.
 - m. Deploys medical devices (e.g., staplers, clips, Ligasure®)
 - n. Harvests and prepares bone and tissue grafts.
 - o. Performs bone and tendon repair.
 - p. Inserts and secures tissue drainage systems.
 - q. Closes multiple wound layers including:
 - i. Anastomoses
 - ii. Fascia
 - iii. Subcutaneous
 - iv. Cutaneous
 - v. Other tissue
 - r. Applies wound dressings.
 - s. Applies wound vacuum systems.
 - t. Applies and removes splints/casts.
- V. Surgical Procedures – 63 scored (8 not scored)
- a. Assists with GS Procedures including:
 - i. Abdominal exploration
 - ii. Appendectomy
 - iii. Breast Surgery
 - iv. Gastric/Foregut Surgery
 - v. Gallbladder Surgery
 - vi. Liver Surgery
 - vii. Small and Large Bowel Surgery
 - viii. Splenectomy/Splenorrhaphy
 - ix. Hernia Surgery
 - x. Thyroidectomy
 - b. Assists with Minimally Invasive Surgery including:
 - i. Endoscopic/Laparoscopic
 - ii. Robotic
 - iii. Microscopic
 - c. Assists with Cardiovascular Surgery
 - i. Vascular (including access, catheterization, and transplant)
 - ii. Cardiac
 - d. Assists with Ear, Nose and Throat Surgery
 - e. Assists with Neurosurgery including:
 - i. Craniotomy
 - ii. Spine
 - iii. Peripheral Nerve
 - f. Assists with Obstetrics and Gynecologic Surgeries including:
 - i. Cesarean section
 - ii. Hysterectomy
 - iii. Myomectomy
 - g. Assists with Orthopedic Surgery including:
 - i. Sports Medicine including:
 - 1. Upper extremity
 - 2. Lower extremity
 - ii. Arthroplasty/Total Joint
 - iii. Foot and Ankle
 - iv. Hand and Wrist
 - v. Spine
 - vi. Fractures
 - h. Assists with Pediatric surgery
 - i. Assists with Plastic, Cosmetic and Reconstructive Surgery
 - j. Assists with Vascular Surgery
 - k. Assists with Trauma Surgery
 - l. Assists with Thoracic Surgery
 - m. Assists with Urologic Surgery

CSA REFERENCE LIST

The Certification Examination Reference Lists contain the texts used to develop the questions for the certification examinations. The CSA Examination Review Committee uses the most current edition of each text listed for reference when creating examination questions.

New editions of each text may be published after the Candidate Handbook is printed. Candidates need to be sure they utilize the most recent edition of each text. Candidates may find the texts at libraries, bookstores or on the internet.



CSA EXAMINATION RECOMMENDED REFERENCES

The most current editions of the books listed below are used for reference by the NCCSA and the ERC.

SURGERY

Alexander's Care of the Patient in Surgery, 2003, 12th Edition, Jane C. Rothrock ISBN 0323016227

Surgical Recall, 1998, 2nd Edition, Dr. L. H. Blackbourne, MD ISBN-10: 0683301020

Campbell's Operative Orthopaedics, 1987, 7th Edition ISBN 0801610656

Atlas of Surgical Operations, 2010, 9th Edition, Zollinger, (Repair of Indirect Inguinal Hernia), 9th Ed. ISBN 0071602267

A&P

Atlas of Human Anatomy, 2002, 3rd Edition, Frank H. Netter, MD ISBN 1929007116

REFERENCE

Taber's Cyclopedia Medical Dictionary, 2013, 22nd Edition, F.A. Davis ISBN 9780803629776

MISC/INSTRUMENTATION

The Ethicon Knot Tying Manual, www.ruralareavet.org/PDF/Surgery-Knot_Tying.pdf

American Heart Association – CPR Guidelines, www.heart.org

STUDY TIPS

1. **Learn about the examination by reviewing your candidate handbook:** This candidate handbook contains a content area outline, recommended reference list, and sample exam questions.
2. **Examination content area outline:** Familiarize yourself with each subject listed in the outline – all of these items appear on the examination.
3. **Recommended reference list:** These references were used to create the examination questions. Cross reference the content outline with these materials.
4. **Study guides:** The NCCSA provides a study guide as a tool for you to familiarize yourself with the exam format and to direct you to areas of concentration that is covered on the CSA examination.



Section Six

Applications and Forms

<https://csaexam.com/payments/exam-application/>