

## **REGISTERED NURSE FIRST ASSIST**

### **What is an Registered Nurse First Assist (RNFA)?**

A Registered Nurse First Assist (RNFA) is a nurse who is prepared to practice in a variety of acute or critical care settings. In addition, they are prepared to function in collaboration with surgeons to perform delegated medical functions during the intraoperative phase of patient care.

### **What does a RNFA do?**

A RNFA provides continuous and comprehensive care to acutely or critically ill patients throughout the perioperative period who are undergoing surgery. They function collaboratively with patients, families, surgeons, and other members of the health care team. The goals of the RNFA are to stabilize patients, minimize complications and promote safety, provide physical care, and to provide competent assistance to the surgeon throughout patients' perioperative stay. To achieve these goals, RNFAs provide direct patient care management, admit and discharge patients from surgical areas, perform histories and physicals, analyze clinical data, order and or perform necessary diagnostic tests or procedures, develop, implement and evaluate the therapeutic regimen, provide pre-and post operative teaching, minimize fragmentation by providing coordination of care, manage transitions of patients to other units or out-patient settings, and serve as patient advocates.

The RNFA works in collaboration with the surgeon and other members of the perioperative team to achieve optimal surgical outcomes for the patient. Intraoperatively, the RNFA practices at the direction of the surgeon and assists him or her by performing technical skills such as tissue handling, providing exposure, using instruments, suturing, and providing hemostasis.. RNFA behaviors may vary depending on patient populations, services provided, institutional policy, and state nurse practice acts.

### **Who employs RNFAs?**

RNFAs may be employed by hospitals to work in perioperative services. They may also be employed by surgeons to help manage the care of surgical patients, assist the surgeon during the operative phase, help patients with the transition to out-patient settings, and manage patients in clinic settings. RNFAs may also be employed in surgical centers or specialty centers such as cardiovascular, vascular, orthopedics, plastics, ENT, and wound care.

### **Who recognizes RNFAs for reimbursement?**

The quality and value of the services provided by RNFAs is recognized by physicians and institutional employers in all surgical settings and specialties. RNFAs are nationally recognized by the American College of Surgeons, the Association of Operating Room Nurses, the American Nurses Association, and all state boards of nursing in addition to being eligible for reimbursement by other major payers.

### **What are the classroom and clinical requirements for the RNFA?**

The courses provide students with a strong advanced generalist base for managing the care of surgical patients with common health problems and complex problems that may require intensive collaborative management. Clinical practica are designed so that students will acquire the knowledge, skills, and practice experiences to develop the competencies.

### **What are the admission criteria?**

Requirements for admission vary depending on which entry point you choose. There are three points of entry into the RNFA program:

1. Post BSN certificate
2. Post MSN certificate
3. MSN dual option to obtain an Acute Care Adult Nurse Practitioner/ RNFA degree  
<http://main.uab.edu/Sites/nursing/programs/msn/9027/>

***For students seeking to enter as a post BSN student the minimum requirements for admission in good standing include:***

- BSN degree from a regionally accredited institution, equivalent to the one offered by the School of Nursing at UAB
- A grade point average (GPA) of at least 3.0 on a 4.0 scale either cumulative or on the last 60 semester credit hours
- Letters of professional reference attesting to the applicant's potential for graduate study
- Two (2) years of perioperative experiences and certification or eligibility for certification as a Certified Nurse Operating Room (CNOR)
- Letters of professional reference attesting to the applicant's potential for graduate study
- BCLS and ACLS certification
- Letter of agreement from a board certified surgeon agreeing to serve as a mentor for the required practica

**For students seeking to enter as a post MSN student the minimum requirements for admission in good standing include:**

- MSN degree with a clinical specialization supportive of the RNFA curriculum from a regionally accredited institution, equivalent to the one offered by the School of Nursing at UAB
- A grade point average (GPA) of at least 3.0 on a 4.0 scale either cumulative or on the last 60 semester credit hours
- Letters of professional reference attesting to the applicant's potential for graduate study
- BCLS and ACLS certification
- Letter of agreement from a board certified surgeon agreeing to serve as a mentor for the required practica

**For students seeking to enter the MSN dual option the minimum requirements for admission in good standing include:**

- BSN degree from a regionally accredited institution, equivalent to the one offered by the School of Nursing at UAB
- A grade point average (GPA) of at least 3.0 on a 4.0 scale either cumulative or on the last 60 semester credit hours
- Letters of professional reference attesting to the applicant's potential for graduate study
- ACLS certification
- Letter of agreement from a board certified surgeon agreeing to serve as a mentor for the required practica
- A minimum of 410 on the MAT, or a minimum of 480 on the GMAT or a combined score of 1000 on the verbal and quantitative sections of the Graduate Record Examination (GRE)

\*An interview may be required based on the student's means of entry into the program. All students need to be prepared to schedule an interview.

**\*GRE, MAT, GMAT is waived for students with a 3.2 or better GPA.** For complete details, please visit [http://www.uab.edu/images/sonimg/PDF/GREMAT\\_waiver.pdf](http://www.uab.edu/images/sonimg/PDF/GREMAT_waiver.pdf)

**If I do not meet the requirements, can I be admitted on probation?**

No, probationary admission is not available to students who do not meet these requirements.

**When will I receive confirmation that I have been accepted into the program?**

You will be notified by Email of your acceptance or denial within 30 days after the application submission deadline.

**For International Students: If your Visa status is F1 or J1, make an appointment with your course faculty by week 2 of each semester to plan how you will meet Federal Regulations.**

**How long is the program of study?**

Depending on the point of entry you choose the program can range from 9-52 semester hours.

**Will I be eligible to take a nurse practitioner certification examination if I complete the program?**

Upon graduation **from the MSN dual option**, students are eligible to sit for Adult Acute Care Nurse Practitioner Examination by either the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) or the American Association of Critical Care Nurses (AACN). Students are also eligible for the American Academy of Nurse Practitioner Adult Nurse Practitioner Examination. The Perioperative Certification Board (PCB) requires 2000 hours to be eligible for the Registered Nurse First Assist. The ACNP and RNFA practicum is counted toward these hours. The UAB School of Nursing is an approved by the PCB to offer the RNFA program.

**How do I become eligible to practice as an ACNP/RNFA in my state of residence?**

Individual states have different requirements regarding licensure for advanced practice nurses. You will need to contact your state's board of nursing to learn about specific requirements.

**What certification will I be eligible for as a Post BSN or Post MSN student?**

The Perioperative Certification Board (PCB) requires 2000 hours to be eligible for the Registered Nurse First Assist. The RNFA practicum is counted toward these hours. An independent clinical internship is to be arranged by the student and is the responsibility of the student to meet the eligibility requirements for the RNFA certification exam.

**Where can I get more information?**

Internet website: <http://www.uab.edu/son>

**For general information about the application process**

Peter Tofani, MS, LTC(R)  
Director Student Affairs  
(205) 975-5302  
E-Mail: [tofani@uab.edu](mailto:tofani@uab.edu)

OR

Celia Ohman, MSN, RN  
Student Nurse Recruiter  
(205) 934-5491  
E-Mail: [caohman@uab.edu](mailto:caohman@uab.edu)

**Information about the Registered First Nurse Assist Program**

Theresa Wadas, MSN, CRNP  
(205) 934-9309  
E-Mail [twadas@uab.edu](mailto:twadas@uab.edu)

## **REGISTERED NURSE FIRST ASSIST**

### **What is a typical program of study for the MSN ACNP/RNFA dual option?**

#### **Fall - Year I**

NUR 600 Research and Statistics for Advanced Practice (4)  
NUR 612 Advanced Pathophysiology (3)  
NUR 614 Assessment and Diagnostic Reasoning for Advanced Practice Nursing (4)  
NFA 620 Surgical Techniques (3-4)

#### **Spring - Year I**

NUR 601 Role Development for Advanced Nursing Practice (3)  
NUR 613 Pharmacology and Therapeutics (3)  
NCA 620 Advanced Adult Acute Care Nursing I (4)  
NFA 621 Advanced Perioperative Nursing I (3)

#### **Summer - Year I**

NCA 622 Advanced Adult Acute Care Nursing II (3)  
NCA 685 Practicum I: Adult Acute Care Nurse Practitioner (3)  
NFA 622 Advanced Perioperative Nsg Practicum I... (1)

#### **Fall - Year II**

NUR 602 Issues Affecting Advanced Nursing Practice (3)  
NCA 623 Advanced Adult Acute Care Nursing III (3)  
NCA 686 Practicum II: Adult Acute Care Nurse Practitioner (3)  
NFA 622 Advanced Perioperative Nsg Practicum I (1)

#### **Spring - Year II**

NCA 692 Residency: Adult Acute Care Nurse (6)  
NFA 622 Advanced Perioperative Nsg Practicum I (1)

**Total 51 – 52 credit hours**

### **What is a typical program of study for the Post MSN RNFA or Post BSN certificate program?**

#### **Fall or Spring**

NFA 620Q Surgical Techniques (3-4)

NFA 621Q Advanced Perioperative Nursing I (3)

#### **Fall or Spring**

NFA 622Q Advanced Perioperative Nursing 1 Practicum (1-3)

**Total 9-10 credit hours**