

Registered Nurse First Assistant (RNFA)

What is a Registered Nurse First Assistant?

A Registered Nurse First Assistant (RNFA) is prepared to practice in a variety of acute or critical care settings. The RNFA, in collaboration with the surgeon, provides continuous and comprehensive patient care throughout the perioperative period. The RNFA works closely with patients, families, surgeons, and other members of the health care team to achieve high quality goals for patients. The goals of the RNFA are to stabilize patients, minimize complications and promote safety, provide physical care, and provide competent assistance to the surgeon throughout the patient's perioperative stay. To achieve these goals, the RNFA provides direct patient care management; admits and discharges patients from surgical areas; performs pre- and post-operative assessments; analyzes clinical data; orders and or performs necessary diagnostic tests or procedures; develops, implements, and evaluates the therapeutic regimen; provides pre-and post-operative teaching; minimizes fragmentation by coordinating care; manages transitions of patients to other units; and serves as patient advocate.

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 be employed in surgical or specialty centers such as cardiovascular, orthopedics, plastics, ENT, and wound care.

Can I specialize further?

There is a Dual Adult Acute and Continuing Care/RNFA specialty track leading to a Masters of Science in Nursing which allows for national certification as a Nurse Practitioner following graduation. See the Fact Sheet for Nurse Practitioner Adult Acute and Continuing Care/RNFA for further information on that specialty track. Electives are available for knowledge base enhancement in subjects such as cardiovascular, and diabetes management.

What kind of experience do I need?

A Baccalaureate in Nursing and 2 years of Operating Room experience and CNOR-eligible, or a Master's in Nursing Science. If you have 2 years of Operating room experience, you take 3 credit hours of NFA 620 Surgical Techniques. The Master's prepared nurse with no Operating Room experience takes 4 hours of NFA 620 which has 8 hours of laboratory in learning how to scrub and do sterile techniques. BCLS and ACLS certification are required prior to starting course work.

What are the admission criteria?

Requirements for admission to the RNFA post-baccalaureate track vary depending on the applicant's previous preparation:

Admission to the RNFA secondary specialization requires a letter of agreement from a board-certified surgeon agreeing to serve as a mentor for the required practica.

1. Baccalaureate in Nursing and 2 years of Operating Room Experience; CNOR-eligible; **OR**
2. Master's in Nursing
3. Both 1 and 2 applicants must meet the admission requirements of the School of Nursing.
4. BCLS and ACLS certification are required prior to starting course work.

- An undergraduate grade point average (GPA) of at least 3.0 on a 4.0 scale either cumulatively or on the last 60 semester credit hours
- (3) Letters of professional reference attesting to the applicant's potential for graduate study
- Standardized test score (MAT, GRE, GMAT)* A minimum score of 410 on the MAT; or a minimum score of 480 on the GMAT; or a combined score of 1000 on the verbal and quantitative sections of the Graduate Record Examination (GRE)*
- Additional – Selected options may require experience prior to enrollment in a specialty courses.

* GRE/GMAT/MAT Waiver Process: http://www.uab.edu/nursing/images/stories/infostudents/GRE_MAT_waiver.pdf

Approval for the GRE/GMAT/MAT Waiver does not imply or guarantee admission to the MSN program. When all of your transcripts are evaluated, if you do not meet the requirements, you will be notified that you need to take the GRE/GMAT/MAT. Candidates not approved for the GRE/GMAT/MAT waiver will be required to take the GRE/GMAT/MAT before final action on their application for master's study. The School of Nursing at UAB must receive the official score by the posted materials deadline. Applicants for the GRE/GMAT/MAT waiver must meet the same requirements for admission to the MSN program as all other applicants.

*An alternate master's in nursing pathways option is available: <http://www.uab.edu/nursing/student-information/acad-prog/amnp>

***The following individuals are not eligible for the GRE waiver process:

- International applicants
- Non-Native English speaking applicants
- Dual degree seeking program applicants MSN/MPH

For International Students:

- All foreign transcripts evaluated by the Educational Credential Evaluators, Inc www.ece.org OR the World Education Services www.wes.org, sent from the evaluators directly to the School of Nursing
- A degree equivalent to a bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited educational institution in the United States
- A score of 500 or higher on the Test of English as a Foreign Language, TOEFL
- Standardized test score. A minimum combined score of 1000 on the verbal and quantitative sections of the Graduate Record Examination (GRE).
- If your Visa status is F1 or J1, meet with your course faculty by week 2 of each semester to plan how you will meet Federal Regulations
- Possess a nursing license to practice nursing in the state where you plan to conduct your clinical practicum

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

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

What are the classroom and clinical requirements?

Total credit hours: 9-10 Hours; Didactic Hours: 6-7; Clinical Hours: 3 hours minimum;; Total Hours of direct Patient Care: 180 contact hours.

Descriptive narrative: Didactic content specific to the secondary specialization of RNFA is provided in 2 courses. A 32-hours "hands on" surgical laboratory is part of the NFA 620 Surgical Techniques course. Clinical practicum hours are accomplished in the perioperative environment in one course with a surgeon mentor. Students are required to visit the campus in Birmingham for the "hands on" surgical laboratory.

How many semesters are required for full-time study? Is part-time study offered?

Full-time study, as defined by the University is 9 hours and is not available in this post-baccalaureate option.

What certification examination is available if I complete the program?

The Perioperative Certification Board (PCB) requires 2000 hours to be eligible for the Registered Nurse First Assistant certification. The RNFA practicum in this post-baccalaureate option counts toward fulfillment of these hours. The number of hours counted towards eligibility to apply for the RNFA examination is dependent upon the student's entry track. The UAB School of Nursing is approved by the PCB to offer the RNFA program.

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

Individual states have different requirements. You will need to contact your state's board of nursing to learn about specific requirements.

What is a typical program of study for the RNFA post-baccalaureate option?

Fall	NFA 620 Surgical Techniques.....	3(post-BSN) or 4 (post-MSN) credit hours
Spring	NFA 621 Advanced Perioperative Nursing I.....	1 credit hours
	NFA 622 Advanced Perioperative Nursing I Practicum.....	3 credit hours
Total		9 – 10 credit hours

Where can I get more information?

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

General information about the application process
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