We are excited that you have taken an interest in our program. The application process can be overwhelming and intimidating. We prepared this document to assist you in your quest to become a nurse anesthetist. This is a guide and is not all inclusive. The intention is to get you “on the right track” preparing for an interview process. Please let us know if you have any questions about what is contained in this document.

We suggest you try to maximize your time with friends and family before the start of a program. We suggest beginning to save money and work on reducing your cost of living. Two of the most common stressors in a nurse anesthesia program are relationships with family and friends and money. If you work on both areas now, it will help ease your transition into a program.

Non-Clinical Preparation

The four pillars of success for our program are:

- The “R” Factor
- Emotional Intelligence
- Managing Criticism
- GRIT

A common area students struggle with in a nurse anesthesia program is emotional intelligence. A majority of the issues we deal with regarding students in the program is not related to clinical performance. Most issues surround interpersonal conflicts arising from a lack of understanding emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence is defined as:

1. **Perceiving Emotions**: The first step in understanding emotions is to perceive them accurately. In many cases, this might involve understanding nonverbal signals such as body language and facial expressions.
2. **Reasoning With Emotions**: The next step involves using emotions to promote thinking and cognitive activity. Emotions help prioritize what we pay attention and react to; we respond emotionally to things that garner our attention.

3. **Understanding Emotions**: The emotions that we perceive can carry a wide variety of meanings. If someone is expressing angry emotions, the observer must interpret the cause of their anger and what it might mean. For example, if your boss is acting angry, it might mean that he is dissatisfied with your work; or it could be because he got a speeding ticket on his way to work that morning or that he’s been fighting with his wife.

4. **Managing Emotions**: The ability to manage emotions effectively is a crucial part of emotional intelligence. Regulating emotions, responding appropriately and responding to the emotions of others are all important aspects of emotional management.

*Taken from:*  
http://psychology.about.com/od/personalitydevelopment/a/emotionalintell.htm

Most students who struggle during the program have issues with **Perceiving Emotions** and **Reasoning With Emotions**. Students who excel in the program eventually do well with all four phases. Please read about emotional intelligence to reflect how understanding it might have a positive impact for you during the program.

Another area students struggle with during nurse anesthesia programs is receiving criticism about their clinical, academic and personal performance. Most criticism is not personal but meant to be a method for improving your clinical performance and personal growth. All students in our program are required to purchase and read the following book:

**“The Truth Doesn’t Have to Hurt: How to use criticism to strengthen relationships, improve performance, and promote change”** by Deb Bright (2015)

As a student in a program, you are always going to experience stressful “events” (E). It is how you react/respond (the “R” factor) that will determine the outcome (“O”) of your day. The equation, **“E + R = O”**, is a tool we use to help guide and improve the performance of our students. You don’t control the events in the operating room but you can earn better outcomes by providing discipline to your response/reaction.

Additional reading focusing on the “R Factor” can be gained by reading the following book:

**“Above the Line: Lessons in Leadership and Life from a Championship Season”** by Urban Meyer with Wayne Coffey

Over the course of the program, there will be events and situations that make it feel like it will be tough to overcome adversity. We are looking for applicants who exhibit **GRIT**. We need those students who can persevere. Information on **GRIT** can be found in the following book:
Persons hiring CRNAs are looking more at the non-anesthesia related attributes (“soft skills”) of potential employees. Most employers assume that coming from our program that you are competent in your ability to deliver anesthesia safely. Our goal is to help prepare you for the current and future job market.

Clinical Preparation

There are two textbooks from the NBCRNA (the company that provides the board exam) bibliography that you can use to prepare for the application/interview process.


- Chap. 5 – General Principles, Pharmacodynamics and Drug Receptor Concepts
- Chap. 6 – Pharmacokinetics
- Chap. 13 – Autonomic and Cardiac Pharmacology
- Chap. 14 - Chemistry & Physics
- Chaps. 16, 17 – Clinical Monitoring of the CV and Respiratory systems
- Chap. 20 – Fluid, Electrolyte and Blood Component Therapy
- Chaps 23, 26 and 28 – the physiology sections only of these chapters (CV, Resp. and Neuro)


- Chap.2 - Basic Principles of Pharmacology
- Chaps. 1, 11, 14, 15, 24, 25 – Various Physiology Chapters

The following websites may be beneficial to your preparation:

- Khan Academy - [www.khanacademy.org](http://www.khanacademy.org)
  - Physics
    - Fluids
    - Forces & Newton’s Laws of Motion
    - Work & Energy
  - Chemistry
    - Chemical bonds
    - Gases
    - Acids and Bases
  - Health & Medicine
    - Focus on the circulatory, respiratory and nervous systems
- [www.cvphysiology.com](http://www.cvphysiology.com)
Additional preparation should focus on the following areas:

- Ventilator modes and interventions
  - i.e. volume control vs. pressure control, PEEP, PS
- Arterial Blood Gas interpretation and interventions
- Lab values and interventions to correct values
- Hemodynamics and shock states
  - Purpose of the heart, valves
  - Fluid movement, pressure gradients, flow through a closed system
  - IABP
- EKG interpretation and interventions
- Electrolytes
  - Inside and outside of the cell
  - Concentration gradients related neuron and cardiac action potentials
- Autonomic nervous system
  - Physiology and pharmacology

We hope that you gained valuable information from this guide. As you can see, preparation as a student in a nurse anesthesia program is not just about clinical skills and knowledge. During the interview process, we only have a short period of time to assess your clinical abilities and “soft skills”. It is up to you to practice communicating and presenting yourself to us.