Qualification In Apheresis

Chrissy Anderson, BSN, RN, HP (ASCP)
ASFA Annual Meeting Review Workshop
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STRATEGIC DIRECTION #2: EDUCATION

The purpose of this strategic direction is continuing to provide multiple avenues of education for apheresis professionals.

iii. Establish a path to apheresis qualification and/or certification
ASFA & ASCP Collaboration for Credentialing in Apheresis

• As of December, 2015 there is a new *International* credential available in Apheresis Medicine for apheresis professionals:

**Qualification In Apheresis (QIA)**
Certification & Qualification is the process by which a non-governmental agency or association grants recognition of competence to an individual who has met certain predetermined qualifications, as specified by the agency or association.

The ASCP Board of Certification (BOC) provides a mechanism for these individuals to be recognized as having the necessary competence to perform the medical laboratory roles they seek.

- This mechanism is called certification.

BOC Qualifications recognize specific skills in several technical areas of laboratory medicine and related fields. Upon meeting specific educational and work experience requirements, candidates are eligible to complete an online examination.

Successful candidates are awarded a credential demonstrating their proficiency.
Why is Certification & Qualification Important?

Qualification provides an opportunity to prove your competence in key areas of laboratory medicine & related fields such as apheresis

What are the advantages of completing a Qualification?

• Visible recognition of specific skills in a technical area with the Qualification initials after the ASCP credentials
• Recognition by state licensure. The state of Florida recognizes those individuals certified and qualified as HT(ASCP)QIHC toward meeting the specialist licensure requirements for histology.
• More job possibilities and career mobility throughout the country and profession
• Professional growth and recognition
• Knowledge and education such as keeping up with state of the art technology
Road to Qualification In Apheresis

• 1993 ASFA & ASCP establish two apheresis certifications: Hemapheresis Practitioner (HP) and Apheresis Technician (AT)
• 2009 ASCP retires both HP & AT due to lack of participation
• ASFA pursues alternate methods to return apheresis credentialing to members and apheresis practitioners
• 2014 ASFA & ASCP reach an agreement, Memo of Understanding (MOU) to partner again to offer apheresis credentialing through BOC Apheresis Qualification:
  Qualification to be developed through ASCP’s BOC Apheresis Qualification Working Group/Committee
• December, 2014 Working group for establishing Apheresis Qualification invitations were sent out to form committee
• May, 2015 First meeting at ASCP Headquarters
  – “QIA” is selected as title of apheresis qualification by working group/committee: Qualification In Apheresis (QIA)
• September, 2015 Second meeting to finalize qualification process
• Various Conference Calls in between to move the process forward
• October 2015 BOC BOG approved qualification process and documents
• December 2015 application process for QIA opens within ASCP

QIA Working Group: Marisa Marques-Chair, Chrissy Anderson-Vice Chair, Robert Weinstein, Wanda Koetz, Antonia Hagen-Coonradt, Patricia Fredrich, & Christopher Chun
WHO?
Who should become Qualified?

• Simple answer: everyone who meets the eligibility requirements and plans to continue working in apheresis

• Over time, it is the committee’s hope that QIA will become standard as a best practice credential for apheresis professionals throughout the world, that will bridge us together in light of the many types of education, licensure, and experience represented throughout apheresis practice.
Should physicians become Qualified?

College of American Pathology
Transfusion Medicine Guidelines (2009)
TRM.42255

Are medical personnel performing and/or supervising therapeutic apheresis qualified by education and training?

NOTE: The personnel involved in provision of therapeutic apheresis, including operators and supervising physicians, shall be appropriately qualified. Examples of appropriate qualification have been established by the American Society for Apheresis (ASFA.) These guidelines were published and are available at http://www.apheresis.org/asfa_guidelines/index.cfm.
GUIDELINES FOR PHYSICIANS OVERSEEING THERAPEUTIC APHERESIS

INTRODUCTION
The following document for the establishment of Guidelines for Physicians overseeing Therapeutic Apheresis (TA) is intended to focus attention on two issues important in the quality of care: the recognition that a qualified physician is the best provider of TA services and the importance of the maintenance of TA professional knowledge.

THERAPEUTIC APHERESIS SERVICE
A licensed physician, qualified by training and/or by experience, who will be called the Medical Director in these Guidelines, should oversee each TA Service.
GUIDELINES FOR THERAPEUTIC APHERESIS ALLIED HEALTH STAFF

INTRODUCTION

The following Guidelines for therapeutic apheresis (TA) allied health staff, developed by the Allied Health Committee of the American Society for Apheresis (ASFA) are intended to focus attention on two issues important in the quality of care: the recognition that a qualified staff is the best provider of TA services and the importance of the maintenance of professional knowledge. It is also important to note that unlike donor apheresis procedures, TA procedures are performed on patients with underlying disease processes and physiologic abnormalities which have the potential to be exacerbated by the TA procedure. As a result, different educational and training requirements are necessary for the performance of TA procedures compared to donor procedures.

THERAPEUTIC APHERESIS STAFF QUALIFICATIONS

Therapeutic Apheresis (TA) Service staff should consist of medical personnel qualified to perform TA procedures.
QIA Eligibility Routes

To be eligible for this category, an applicant must satisfy the requirements of at least one of the following routes:

• **Route 1:** RN, LPN, or LVN with U.S. state license, certificate, or diploma*, AND three years full-time acceptable experience in apheresis or five years part-time acceptable experience in apheresis within the last ten years.

• **Route 2:** Professional nurse diploma or equivalent received outside of the U.S.*, AND three years full-time acceptable experience in apheresis or five years part-time acceptable experience in apheresis within the last ten years.

• **Route 3:** ASCP or ASCPi certification in the following categories: MLS/MT, BB, SBB or MLT AND three years of full-time acceptable experience in apheresis or five years part-time acceptable experience in apheresis within the last ten years.
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QIA Eligibility Routes

- **Route 4:** Baccalaureate degree from a regionally accredited college/university in the U.S. or an accredited/approved educational institution** outside of the U.S. with a combination of 24 semester hours (36 quarter hours) of biology and/or chemistry, AND three years of full-time acceptable experience in apheresis or five years part-time acceptable experience in apheresis within the last ten years.

- **Route 5:** Doctorate in medicine or equivalent of a U.S. Doctorate in Medicine**, AND one year of acceptable experience as an apheresis physician within the last five years.

- **Route 6:** Doctorate in medicine or equivalent of a U.S. Doctorate in Medicine**, AND documented training in a relevant accredited post graduate medical education program which includes apheresis (e.g., transfusion medicine, hematology/oncology, nephrology, clinical pathology).

* Applicants must submit a notarized copy of their official certificate, diploma, or license.

**Accredited/approved by a governing regulatory association or Ministry, or eligibility will be determined by transcript evaluation. The baccalaureate degree must be equivalent to a U.S. baccalaureate degree. A doctorate in medicine must be equivalent to a U.S. doctorate in medicine.
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Apheresis Experience and Training

Routes 1 – 4:
To fulfill the experience requirement for the Qualification in Apheresis examination, you must have experience within the time frame required in at least one of the following apheresis areas:

- Therapeutic plasma exchange (TPE)
- Red blood cell exchange
- Cellular depletions
- Selective adsorptions
- Extracorporeal photopheresis (ECP)
- Mononuclear cell collections (MNC)
- Hematopoietic progenitor cell collection (HPC)
- Automated red blood cell collections (RBC)
- Donor platelet collections
- Donor plasma collections
- Granulocyte collections
Apheresis Experience and Training

Routes 5 & 6:

• To fulfill the experience/training requirement for the Qualification in Apheresis examination, you must have experience/training in all of the following areas. Experience must be completed within the time frame required.
  - Evaluating patients and/or donors for suitability to undergo apheresis procedures
  - Writing orders for apheresis procedures
  - Supervising apheresis procedures
  - Evaluating and managing adverse events during apheresis procedures
HOW?

Identify the Qualification you’re applying for and determine your eligibility.

- Apply online [www.ascp.org](http://www.ascp.org)
- Choose a route of eligibility depending on the education and training you've completed.

Gather your education and work experience documentation

- AFTER you submit an online application, documentation required to establish your eligibility must be submitted to our office.
- Submit all documentation required to establish eligibility to:
  ASCP Board of Certification
  33 W. Monroe St., Suite 1600
  Chicago, IL 60603
Notification of Application Status

• When the status of your examination application changes (i.e., is determined deficient, ineligible, eligible, etc.) you will receive a notification sent to the email you provided on your application informing you to login to your ASCP account for specific information /details regarding the status of your application.

• All notifications regarding the status of your application (from submission to examination results) are accessed by logging into your ASCP account.
Schedule your examination

• Once your application and eligibility documentation has been approved by the BOC, you’ll receive an email admission notification containing an authorization number to the examination. The examination consists of a 50-question multiple choice timed test that must be completed within a 90-minute time period. The test is self-administered on your own computer at the date and time of your choice within the 60 day time period indicated on your admission. To access the online examination, click on this link to the testing site.
Prepare for Exam

Study for Qualification.

• To help you prepare for the qualification examination, reading lists and topic outlines are available by clicking on the links below:

Qualification in Apheresis, QIA

— [Reading List (PDF)]
— [Topic Outline (PDF)]
Watch for your results and certificate

- You will receive an email notification to review your online score report within 4 – 6 business days after your examination date. You will receive your wall certificate within 3 – 4 weeks after your exam date.
- **Use of Qualification:** Individuals who have been qualified may list their credentials in the following manner:
  - Mary Smith, QIA
  - Mary Smith, CT(ASCP), QIA (for individuals who are both qualified and ASCP certified)
TOPIC OUTLINE

The Qualification in Apheresis examination questions encompass different topics or subtests within the area of Apheresis:

• Basic Science
• Clinical Applications
• Donor/Patient Care
• Instrumentation
• Operational Considerations
• Standards, Guidelines, and Regulations (ASFA, AABB, CAP, FDA, FACT, HIPAA, TJC, etc.).

Each of these subtests comprises a specific percentage of the overall 50-question qualification examination.
TOPIC OUTLINE

The subtests for the examination are outlined below:

I. Basic Science (5-10%)

   A. Hematology/Coagulation
   B. Immunohematology/Genetics
      1. Blood component therapy
      2. HLA
      3. ABO
   C. Immunology
      1. Antibodies
      2. Immune complexes
   D. Laboratory Testing

II. Clinical Applications (10-20%)

   A. Donor Apheresis
      1. Platelets
      2. Red blood cells
      3. Plasma
      4. White blood cells (e.g., granulocytes)
   B. Therapeutic Apheresis
      1. Plasma exchange
      2. Red cell exchange
      3. Cell depletion
      4. Selective adsorption/filtration procedures

5-10 Questions

2-5 Questions

5-10 Questions
TOPIC OUTLINE

II. Clinical Applications (10-20%)
  cont.

C. Cellular Therapy
   1. Hematopoietic progenitor cells
   2. Extracorporeal photopheresis (ECP)
   3. Mononuclear cell collections (e.g., lymphocytes, monocytes)

D. Diseases Treated with Apheresis

III. Donor/Patient Care (30-40%)
   (15-20 Q)

A. Assessment/Monitoring
B. Replacement Fluids
C. Anticoagulation
D. Medications (e.g., calcium, antihistamine) and Drug Interactions
E. Venous Access
F. Fluid Balance
G. Age-Related Considerations
H. Adverse Reactions
TOPIC OUTLINE

IV. Instrumentation (10-20%)

A. Theories and Techniques of Separation
   1. Centrifugation (e.g., intermittent and continuous flow)
   2. Membrane
   3. Columns

B. General Principles of Automated Instruments*
   1. Anticoagulation of extracorporeal circuit
   2. Extracorporeal blood volume
   3. Efficiencies of separation and/or collection
   4. Clinical applications (see II.A.—D.)

*The majority of instrument questions will address general processes and procedures applicable to most instruments (e.g. alarm codes for specific instruments will NOT be tested). The troubleshooting questions will address day to day problems encountered on any instrument; they will not be instrument specific.
TOPIC OUTLINE

V. Operational Considerations (10-20%)
   A. Quality Assurance (e.g., cGMP, cGTP, validation)
   B. Quality Control
      1. Product yield
      2. Instrument efficiencies
   C. Equipment Maintenance
   D. Safety (e.g., OSHA, CDC)
   E. Infection Control

VI. Standards, Guidelines, and Regulations (ASFA, AABB, CAP, FDA, FACT, HIPAA, TJC, etc.) (10-20%)
   A. Informed Consent
   B. Confidentiality
   C. Donor Selection
   D. Facility Licensure and Accreditation
   E. Training & Competency

All Board of Certification examinations use conventional and SI units for results and reference ranges
Suggested Reading for QIA Preparation*

**JOURNALS**
*Journal of Clinical Apheresis*. American Society for Apheresis (ASFA), Wiley, British Columbia. [Link to View](#)

**TEXTS**


**REGULATIONS**


Suggested Reading for QIA Preparation*

Additional ONLINE resources:
AABB  www.aabb.org
American Nephrology Nurses Association  www.annanurse.org
American Society for Apheresis  www.apheresis.org
American Society of Hematology  www.hematology.org
American Society of Nephrology  www.asn-online.org
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  www.cdc.gov
College of American Pathologists  www.cap.org
Food and Drug Administration  www.fda.gov
HIPAA  www.cms.hhs.gov/hipa
Occupational Safety and Health Administration  www.osha.gov

*This list is intended only as a partial reference source. Its distribution does not indicate endorsement by the Board of Certification, American Society for Clinical Pathology; nor does the Society wish to imply that the content of the examination will be drawn solely from these publications.
Helpful Hints

• No more *FACT Sheets* for instruments
• Reduced Suggested Reading List
• Due to International Scope of Qualification, focus on referenced best practices and decreased emphasis on US regulations
How to prepare for the test?

• See ASCP BOC Suggested Reading List

• ASFA offers*:
  – Principles of Apheresis Technology
  – ASFA Apheresis Review Workshop at Annual Meeting, May 2016, Palm Springs, CA and future Review Workshops
  – ASFA is planning additional Webinars such as Series of education webinars for those preparing for the exam

• Other on-line resources for organizations and vendors

  *some may require additional registration or purchasing costs
FAQ: What are the credentials for my name if I pass the exam?

• Individuals who have been qualified may indicate this qualification through the use of initials in the following manner:
  
  • Mary Smith, QIA (for individual qualified in apheresis)
  
  • Mary Smith, MLS(ASCP)\textsuperscript{CM}QIA (for individuals who are qualified and who are also ASCP certified)
FAQ: How long is the Qualification valid?

Time Limits and Requalification: Candidates who pass the exam, the qualification is valid for three years.

• This Qualification may be requalified every three years upon payment of a $50 application fee and completion of 6 contact hours of acceptable continuing education / other activities in the area of the Qualification.
FAQ: What if I don’t pass the exam?

- A candidate has five (5) opportunities to sit for any one Qualification.
- If after five attempts, the candidate must meet eligibility requirements under an alternate route of eligibility.
- An eligibility period is three (3) months. A candidate cannot test more than one time during an eligibility period.
- A candidate can reapply at any time after they receive their score report. The candidate will be assigned a new eligibility period after their current eligibility period ends.
- An application fee is required after each attempt upon reapplication.
FAQ: Should physicians become Qualified?

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THERAPEUTIC APHERESIS STAFF QUALIFICATIONS

Therapeutic Apheresis (TA) Service staff should consist of medical personnel qualified to perform TA procedures.
FAQ: Can Apheresis nurses and doctors in countries outside the United States become Qualified, if they do not have apheresis experience in the United States?

YES!
The candidate must meet eligibility requirements under at least one route of eligibility and apply online to ASCP.org.
FAQ: What’s the difference between Certification and Qualification?

A certification examination is a high stakes examination. Employment usually depends on obtaining certification.

A Qualification offers visible recognition of specific skills in a technical area.
ASFA Annual Meeting 2016

Offer two ways to support candidates who are seeking Qualification In Apheresis (QIA)

• Attend the *Apheresis Review Workshop* on Wednesday, May 4 (optional) to help prepare for the exam

• Sit for the *QIA Exam* Friday, May 6, 2016 – two sessions: morning and afternoon*

*Candidates must have already applied and been determined Eligible by ASCP to participate in the QIA Exam Sitting*
In closing...

Apply for the Qualification!
• Spread the word....
• Be the first in your professional group to have “QIA” behind your name!
• Application process is open:
• Additional information available on ASFA website
  www.apheresis.org
ASCP Working Group

• Challenges each of you to become QIA!
• And to tell at least 3 colleagues about the qualification.

Professional Goal For Self: 
Take Qualification Exam!
On behalf of ASCP and ASFA QIA Working Group: “GOOD LUCK!”