



COLLEGE of AMERICAN
PATHOLOGISTS

Participant Handbook

Advanced Practical Pathology Program

March, 2016

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Overview	3
Program Purpose	4
Program Development	5
AP³ Participant Process	5
AP³ Requirements	6
Educational Core (CME) Requirements	6
Cognitive Assessments	6
Practical Assessments	7
AP³ Application Information	7
Application and Eligibility	7
Applicants With a Disability	7
Application Processing	7
Appellate Rights	7
Appeals Process	8
AP³ Program Administration Requirements	8
Verification	8
Adverse Action Notification Requirements	9
Complaints	9
Fees	9
Protected Health Information	9
Term of AP ³ Certificate of Recognition	9
AP³ General Maintenance Requirements	9
Maintenance and Renewal Requirements	9
Certificate Maintenance and Renewal Period	10
Notification of Maintenance and Renewal Deadline	10
Submission of Maintenance and Renewal Materials	10
Cost of Maintenance and Renewal	10
Failure to Meet Maintenance and Renewal Requirements	10
Retention of Maintenance and Renewal Materials	11
Holding Multiple AP³ Certificates of Recognition	11
Misrepresentation	11
Release of Information	12
No Warranty	12
Conflicts of Interest	12
Program Changes	13
CAP Property Rights	13
Help and Support Information	14



OVERVIEW

Congratulations on your decision to apply for an Advanced Practical Pathology Program (AP³). We wish you success in this professional development endeavor in your chosen area of expertise. This handbook should assist you with your questions about the CAP's AP³s, their eligibility and requirements, and the overall application and completion processes.

PROGRAM PURPOSE

The College of American Pathologists (CAP) is the leading organization of board-certified pathologists, serving patients, pathologists, and the public by fostering and advocating excellence in the practice of pathology and laboratory medicine. The CAP designed the Advanced Practical Pathology Program (AP³) to help pathologists learn new skills and gain recognition in related specialty areas. Consistent with its vision, the College is launching several Advanced Practical Pathology Programs with the following rationale:

- The College recognizes a number of exciting new roles that pathologists are beginning to fill, such as performing ultrasound-guided fine-needle aspirations. AP³s provide interested pathologists with a route to acquire the knowledge and skill to assume new roles.
- Many pathologists believe it is important to maintain a pathway that allows them to be recognized for experience acquired during practice.
- While the College recognizes the tremendous learning opportunity afforded by fellowship training, many practicing pathologists and fellowship directors do not believe that completion of a fellowship should signify expertise for an entire practice lifetime. The AP³s are designed to ensure that recipients of AP³ Certificates of Recognition keep their knowledge and skills current.
- In some regions of the country, self-declared specialists compete for business with general pathologists. Many pathologists are concerned that some of these self-declared experts have unproven expertise. The College has designed AP³s to allow pathologists to assert their expertise by meeting objective criteria.
- Other specialty organizations have created advanced programs to promote their own educational programs or products. Many pathologists believe it is important to offer a program that measures knowledge and skill that can be acquired from a variety of sources.
- Some patient advocacy groups have advised patients to always have their biopsies interpreted at large medical centers. Practicing pathologists know that expertise is found in a variety of practice settings large and small. To support these needs, the CAP is developing AP³s in several areas.
- AP³s will provide participants with the opportunity to develop and demonstrate practical knowledge and skills in areas not currently addressed by the American Board of Pathology (ABP).

“Excellent course really help bring information together in a digestible format. I would recommend to everyone in a medical director position or aspiring to become a medical director.”

– Workshop Participant

The purpose of this handbook is to guide potential candidates through the process of obtaining a AP³ Certificate of Recognition.

Participation in the CAP’s AP³ is voluntary and open to everyone who meets the qualification requirements. Membership in the CAP is not required.

PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

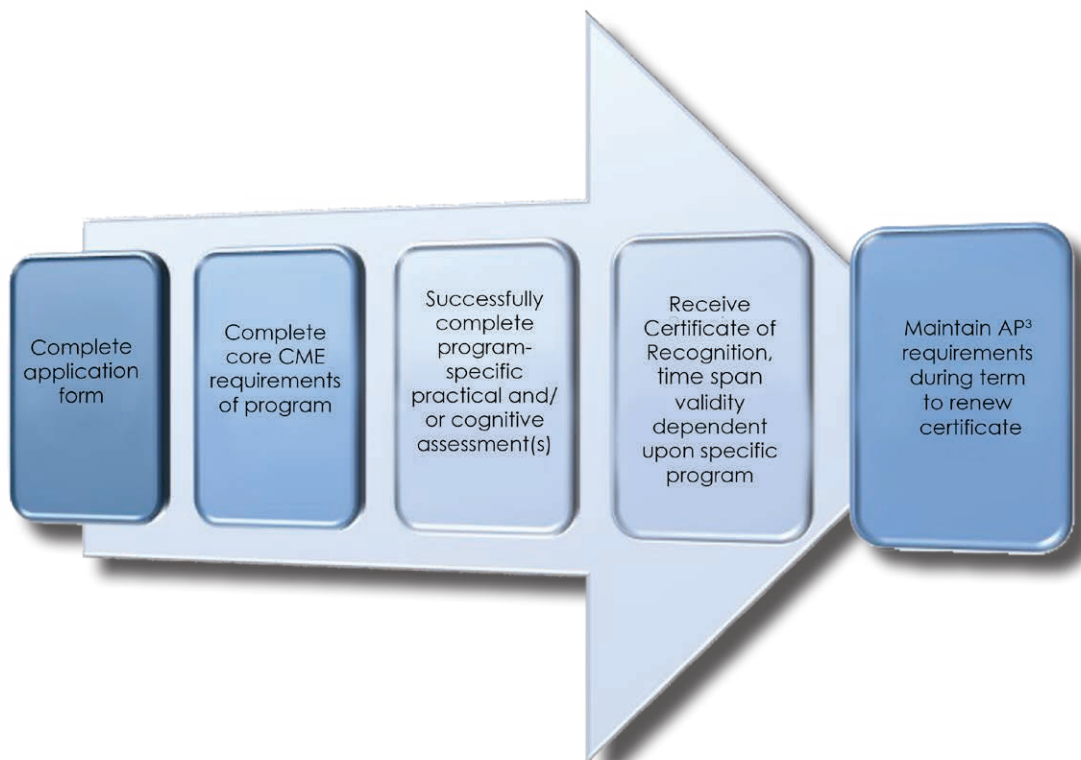
For further information regarding the CAP's Advanced Practical Pathology Program, visit cap.org or email your questions to ap3@cap.org or call 800-323-4040 option 1.

All of the content experts have significant experience in a program's field and are noted for their contributions in academia, research, professional communities, and patient-care arenas.

AP³ PARTICIPANT PROCESS

The process for completing an AP³ consists of four basic steps. Contact ap3@cap.org for the Application and Completion Registration forms referenced below.

1. Complete an application and registration form and remit payment.
2. Complete the core curriculum continuing medical education (CME) requirements for your Advanced Practical Pathology Program. Descriptions and details about the CME are provided in the individual AP³ manual located at cap.org.
3. Successfully complete program, specific cognitive and practical assessments. Details about the assessments are provided in the individual AP³ manuals located at cap.org.
4. The CAP will notify you within two months of completing the CME and assessments if you have met all the requirements for successful completion of the CAP's AP³ Certificate of Recognition. You will receive your certificate four to six weeks after notification.



AP³ REQUIREMENTS

To receive an AP³ Certificate of Recognition, applicants need to meet four requirements. Candidates must:

- Possess board certification in anatomic and/or clinical pathology from the American Board of Pathology (ABP), the American Osteopathic Board of Pathology (AOBP), or the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada (RCPS).
- Successfully complete a specified core curriculum of acceptable continuing medical education in that program's area of expertise as described in the program's requirements. This will vary with each AP³.
- Pass an assessment that measures knowledge of key program content. The scope of knowledge that AP³ participants are expected to know is described in each program.
- Successfully complete one or more practical assessments that measure particular practice skills; for example, the ability to grade prostate adenocarcinoma or the issuance of reports that contain required elements in applicable CAP cancer protocols.

Further detail about program requirements are listed below:

Educational Core (CME) Requirements

A pathologist must meet certain educational requirements to receive an AP³ Certificate of Recognition. These requirements vary with each program. The College shall make available all required courses or educational experiences, or shall designate approved educational opportunities offered by other organizations that meet the CAP's specified CME requirements for that program. It is the responsibility of each candidate to participate in and successfully complete required education. Completion of one or more self-assessment modules (SAMs) may be part of the required CME for specific programs.

Cognitive Assessments

To complete an AP³, a pathologist must demonstrate satisfactory performance on a cognitive assessment that measures practical knowledge in a domain of pathology. AP³ participants are eligible to take the cognitive assessment after completing the education requirements. Cognitive assessments will consist of multiple-choice questions and will be delivered online in a proctored environment. All AP³ cognitive assessments will be delivered through an arrangement with a testing vendor. AP³ participants are responsible for all associated travel expenses to a nearby testing center and for contacting the testing center to arrange a time to take the assessment. Pathologists participating in an AP³ shall be entitled to take the cognitive assessment up to three times to demonstrate satisfactory performance.

“Every pathologist who regularly participates in breast diagnosis should take this course!”

– Workshop Participant

Practical Assessments

A pathologist must demonstrate satisfactory performance on one or more practical assessments that measure performance in a domain of pathology. Participants shall be entitled to take each practical assessment up to three times to demonstrate satisfactory performance. Practical assessments may be offered in conjunction with other educational activities or may be offered independently, depending on the program.

AP³ participants are expected to complete program requirements within one year following completion of the workshop.

AP³ APPLICATION INFORMATION



Application and Eligibility

To be eligible to participate in an Advanced Practical Pathology Program, a pathologist must complete and submit an application for the specific AP³, sign the appropriate attestations, and pay the applicable fee. Only pathologists certified by the ABP, the AOBP, or the RCPS are eligible to complete cognitive and practical assessments and receive certificates of recognition by the CAP. Pathologists in residency or not board certified can participate in the CME program.

Applicants With a Disability

An applicant who wants to request a modification in the assessment environment because of a disability must notify the CAP in writing at the time of application and provide appropriate documentation about the disability and the requested modification. The governing council will consider modification of the testing conditions on an individual basis.

Application Processing

Candidates will receive notification regarding the disposition of their application within two to four weeks of the date it was received. If you don't receive notification within that time, please contact us via email at ap3@cap.org.

Appellate Rights

A candidate who has been notified that his or her AP³ Certificate of Recognition has been denied or revoked may submit a written request for reconsideration to the CAP's Council on Education (COE) within 10 business days after the decision to deny a certificate is rendered.

The request for reconsideration must contain documents supporting the candidate's position and must be based upon the circumstances that existed at the time of the adverse decision. Subsequent remediation will not be considered. It is preferable that all materials be submitted electronically. The pathologist seeking reconsideration may be asked to participate in a conference call to explain the basis of the request for reconsideration.

The COE reviews all documentation and approves or denies an appeal. If the appeal is denied, there is no further action or recourse. The decision is final.

Appeals Process

All appeals regarding assessment results must adhere to the following procedures:

- Candidate submits appeal and provides supporting documentation to the CAP's Advanced Practical Pathology Programs or ap3@cap.org in writing within 10 days of the receipt of the denial of the AP³ Certificate of Recognition and include:
 - o Results of the practical assessment
 - o Results of the cognitive assessment (including score received)
- An appeal letter and supporting documentation must be sent to the CAP via postal mail or email, stating the specific issue/concern and the reason(s) for the appeal.
- The AP³ Working Group reviews appeal documentation and makes a recommendation to the COE within 30 days of receipt of the appeal documentation.
- The COE reviews the appeal documentation and recommendation within 30 days from receipt of appeal.
- The COE will notify the appellant about the outcome of the appeal within 60 days of receipt of appeal. (If the appeal is denied there is no further action or recourse. The decision of the COE is final.)

Please send appeal letter to:

Advanced Practical Pathology Program Coordinator
CAP Learning
College of American Pathologists
325 Waukegan Road
Northfield, IL 60093-2750

*“Very well presented
and organized by very
knowledgeable and
experienced instructors.”*

– Workshop Participant

AP³ PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

In addition to meeting the AP³ requirements in a particular specialty area of pathology, pathologists must comply with program administrative requirements that are detailed in this section.

Verification

A pathologist applying for an AP³ Certificate of Recognition must agree to release information to the CAP that allows the CAP to verify conformance with AP³ requirements. This may involve submission to the CAP of the pathologist's clinical reports or release of authorized copies of medical license, board certifications, or other documentation.

Adverse Action Notification Requirements

A pathologist who holds an AP³ Certificate of Recognition must notify the CAP as soon as the pathologist finds himself or herself to be the subject of an investigation or adverse action by a state or federal agency or a credentialing department, or in the special circumstance where the pathologist finds himself or herself to be the subject of adverse media attention.

Complaints

The CAP, at its sole discretion, may choose to investigate complaints lodged against pathologists holding AP³ Certificates of Recognition or to investigate circumstances that caused a pathologist to be subject to an outside investigation, adverse action, or adverse media attention.

Fees

Fees for participation in an AP³ shall apply at the time of application. Each AP³ will be priced individually based on program requirements and design. Additional fees may be applicable for required educational experiences or for retaking practical assessments or cognitive assessments. Fees for the programs are not inclusive of participant travel expenses. Fees for AP³s will be available in the details of the specific program and as the programs become available.

Protected Health Information

In the course of completing practical assessments, the programs may require an applicant to submit clinical reports or other materials that contain protected health information, as defined by the Health Insurance and Portability Act (“HIPAA”). If an AP³ asks for clinical reports, we require that program participants remove all patient and institution identifying information from the submitted reports.

Term of AP³ Certificate of Recognition

Certificates of recognition for AP³s are valid for three to seven years from the date of program completion (depending on the program), unless otherwise specified in this document.

A pathologist’s AP³ Certificate of Recognition will lapse unless the pathologist submits maintenance requirements and a complete renewal application on a timely basis to allow the assessment of required practical experience and educational experiences. Maintenance requirements are program specific and outlined in the description of each program.

GENERAL MAINTENANCE REQUIREMENTS

Maintenance and Renewal Requirements

Maintenance and renewal requirements are established independently for each AP³. These requirements may consist of but are not limited to participation in CME activities and/or other program technical updates, providing evidence of acceptable performance in practice or submitting other documentation demonstrating efforts to apply the information learned to practice.



Certificate Maintenance and Renewal Period

The certificate maintenance and renewal period begins on the date specified on the certificate of recognition and continues for the period of time determined by each AP³. During this period, the certificate holder must work towards successful completion of the maintenance and renewal requirements. Upon successful completion of the maintenance and renewal requirements and payment of a \$200 renewal fee, a new time-limited certificate will be awarded and a new maintenance and renewal cycle begins. See the individual AP³ manuals for maintenance requirements specific to each program.

Notification of Maintenance and Renewal Deadline

CAP Learning will notify the certificate holder one year in advance of the date his or her certificate expires. Additional reminder notifications will be sent periodically prior to expiration.

Submission of Maintenance and Renewal Materials

Maintenance and renewal materials should be submitted to CAP Learning according to the process specified by each AP³.

Submissions will be accepted up to three months after the expiration date. If the certificate holder fails to submit his or her materials by this date, he or she will no longer be eligible for renewal of the certificate and would need to repeat the entire program (including payment of fees, CME completion, passing of the assessments, and maintenance and renewal) to obtain the AP³ Certificate of Recognition.

In the event of extenuating circumstances preventing successful completion of the maintenance and renewal requirements within this time period, certificate holders may petition to extend the deadline. Requests must be submitted in writing to CAP Learning and must specify the reason for the request and the date by which the requirements will be met.

Cost of Maintenance and Renewal

The cost of maintenance and renewal is \$200, not inclusive of costs associated with participation in required CME. Payment should be sent along with submission of the maintenance and renewal materials.

Failure to Meet Maintenance and Renewal Requirements

Should a certificate holder fail to successfully meet the maintenance and renewal requirements specified for the AP³, he or she will be granted a one-time only, three-month grace period in which to successfully meet the requirements. If the certificate holder does not meet the requirements within the grace period, he or she will no longer be eligible for renewal of the certificate of recognition and would need to repeat the entire program (including payment of fees, CME completion, passing of the assessments, and maintenance and renewal).

Retention of Maintenance and Renewal Materials

All AP³ participant materials (including maintenance and renewal) will be stored electronically and saved for a period of seven years.

“This is one of the best courses I have attended. Even though I had done ultrasound-guided fine-needle aspiration for years, I learned many practice changing concepts at this superbly presented, well-organized course.”

– Workshop Participant

HOLDING MULTIPLE AP³ CERTIFICATES OF RECOGNITION

A pathologist who successfully completes all requirements for other AP³s may hold multiple certificates of recognition. Each AP³ Certificate of Recognition will have its own issue and expiration date.



MISREPRESENTATION

The CAP may revoke AP³ Certificates of Recognition, deny AP³ Certificates of Recognition, or impose other sanctions against any pathologist who makes a misrepresentation relating to the programs. A misrepresentation for purposes of this section includes, but is not limited to, a false statement of fact about the pathologist's qualifications; fabrication or alteration of information, records, or other documentation; failure to advise the CAP of facts or developments that may bear on evaluation of the pathologist; and misstatement of the board certification status of the pathologist. A misrepresentation may be in writing, through spoken word, or through failure to provide material information.

Deliberate misrepresentation of the AP³ Certificate of Recognition status by a pathologist may result in sanctions that may take the form of legal action, refusal to process applications or reapplications, or revocation of the AP³ Certificate of Recognition.

RELEASE OF INFORMATION

Under normal circumstances, the only information the CAP shall release to third parties about a pathologist's participation in an AP³ is whether the pathologist has received a certificate of recognition in a particular discipline and the date of completion for each AP³ certificate held.

Any information or material received by the CAP in connection with the AP³ is considered confidential and will not be released by the CAP unless the pathologist certificate-holder authorizes release in writing or unless the CAP is required by law.

The foregoing notwithstanding, if the CAP at any time learns of any pathologist practices that appear to be unlawful or unethical or that might pose significant risk to patients or the public, the CAP may report such information as it deems appropriate—even without authorization from the pathologist.

No policy, procedure, or other internal document within the CAP relating to its AP³s shall be released to agencies or organizations outside the CAP without authorization from the CAP's COE.

NO WARRANTY

The CAP does not evaluate branded instruments, devices, materials or pathology groups with respect to whether or not such materials, or organizations satisfy requirements for AP³.

“Passing both cognitive and practical assessment boosted my confidence in knowing that I indeed have increased my skills.”

– Workshop participant

The CAP makes no representations and extends no warranties of any kind, either expressed or implied, regarding the merchantability or fitness of any pathologist’s work for a particular purpose. Unless prohibited by law, the CAP disclaims all liability for claims or damages that may arise from use or reliance upon a pathologist who holds an AP³ Certificate of Recognition.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The CAP shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure that AP³s are conducted in an impartial and objective manner, uninfluenced by any personal, financial, or professional interest of any individual acting on behalf of the CAP programs. To that end, the following prohibitions apply:

1. No assessor may be engaged in a close personal, family, business, or professional relationship with any applicant that the assessor examines or evaluates.
2. No assessor may solicit or accept, and no applicant may offer or provide cash or noncash gifts of any type, including personal gifts, products, services, or entertainment provided at no cost or unreasonably discounted cost.
3. No assessor may either formally or informally discuss, solicit, or accept offers to provide an employment or consulting arrangement, referral of business, or other business opportunity with a candidate. The converse situation applies for a candidate.
4. Items #1, 2, and 3 above shall apply through the course of the assessment or examination and until 75 days from the date of the assessment or examination.
5. An applicant who is found to have violated one of the above prohibitions shall be referred to the CAP for investigation and may be subject to sanctions, including requiring the applicant to pay for an additional assessment or examination; refusal to process AP³ reapplications; probation or suspension of AP³ Certificates of Recognition; or denial or revocation of AP³ Certificates of Recognition.

PROGRAM CHANGES

The CAP will approve all changes to its AP³s.

The CAP’s COE shall review all policies governing the AP³ every three years. Updates to the AP³ Candidate Handbook will be made to reflect any policy changes.

Applicants and AP³ certificate holders shall be given reasonable advance notice of program changes that may substantively affect their application or their certificate. Such notice shall normally be provided six months in advance of the effective date of a substantive change.

CAP PROPERTY RIGHTS

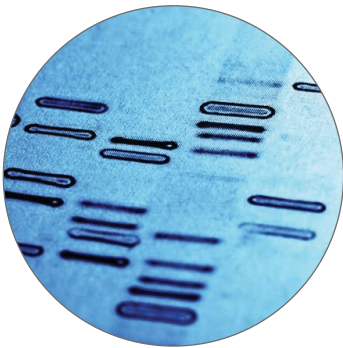
The Advanced Practical Pathology Program is the property of the College of American Pathologists and may not be used without the express permission of the CAP.

Except to the extent permitted by the fair use provisions of the Copyright Act, any entity that wishes to reprint or translate all or any part of any AP³ materials or to incorporate all or any part of any AP³ materials into any other work must first enter into a license agreement by which the entity (a) acknowledges and agrees to respect the CAP's copyright of the material, (b) agrees to make no deceptive claims with respect to its use of the materials or its relationship with the CAP, and (c) accepts such other conditions, including the payment of a royalty, as may be required by the CAP.

Advertisements and other promotional materials of a pathologist who holds an AP³ Certificate of Recognition from the CAP may include the statement, "Advanced Practical Pathology Program in [name of discipline] awarded by the College of American Pathologists" or any slight variant of this statement. Pathologists who hold an AP³ Certificate of Recognition from the CAP shall not refer to themselves as "board certified by the College."

A pathologist who holds an AP³ Certificate of Recognition may not use the College's name or initials except as specified in this policy. It may not use the logo or mark of the College in any manner. A pathologist that is using the name or initials of the College in accordance with this policy must immediately cease use of such name or initials if the pathologist withdraws from the College's AP³ or has his or her AP³ certificate withdrawn or revoked.

The College reserves the right to withdraw the AP³ Certificate of Recognition, or take legal action against, any pathologist that uses the College's name, initials, logo, property, or mark in violation of this policy. Any question about whether a proposed use of the College's name or initials comports with this policy should be addressed to the chair of the CAP's COE at the CAP headquarters.



HELP AND SUPPORT INFORMATION

To contact the CAP about any AP³ question or issue, please use the contact information below:

Advanced Practical Pathology Program
College of American Pathologists
325 Waukegan Road
Northfield, IL 60093-2750
800-323-4040 option 1
847-832-8000 (fax)
Office hours: 7:30 AM–5:30 PM CT

You may also contact the CAP through the CAP homepage at cap.org by selecting the Contact Us link at the top of the page.