



## Competency and Certification

It is important for examiners to understand the difference between *competent* and *certified*. Though you may be competent to conduct a forensic exam, certification is a credential that can only be obtained by successfully passing and maintaining requirements put forth by the International Association of Forensic Nurses (IAFN) and the Commission for Forensic Nursing Certification (CFNC). A certified sexual assault nurse examiner for adults and adolescents may use the designation of SANE-A. Those who have not achieved certification may not.

### What does competent mean?

Florida does not have specific requirements for who may conduct a forensic exam. Section 395.1021, Florida Statutes states:

*Any licensed facility which provides emergency room services shall arrange for the rendering of appropriate medical attention and treatment of victims of sexual assault through:*

- (1) Such gynecological, psychological, and medical services as are needed by the victim*
- (2) The administration of medical examinations, tests, and analysis required by law enforcement personnel in the gathering of evidence required for investigation and prosecution*
- (3) The training of medical support personnel competent to provide the medical services and treatment as described in subsections (1) and (2).*

The Florida Statutes do not define what “medical support personnel competent to provide medical services and treatment” means nor is it listed in the *Adult Sexual Assault Protocol: Initial Forensic Physical Examination* published by the Office of the Attorney General. Thus, there are no training requirements in the state of Florida to conduct a forensic exam. However, the IAFN outlines competency objectives. They are listed in the *Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner Examination Candidate Handbook* published by the International Association of Forensic Nurses. This resource, as well as other valuable information, can be found at [www.iafn.org](http://www.iafn.org).



**Clinical Competency Objectives found in 2013 SANE Certification Examination Handbook (p. 12)**

The following clinical competency objectives should be used to direct the clinical evaluation of the SANE-A candidate. The list is not inclusive but includes the minimum criteria necessary to practice as a competent SANE. The preceptor should evaluate the SANE candidate in all the following areas until competency is demonstrated by the SANE candidate. The preceptor/evaluator will use his/her own clinical judgment and expertise to determine when each individual SANE candidate is competent.

- I. Explains/provides the following to the patient as needed:
  - A. General consent
  - B. Procedures and equipment
  - C. Rights to privacy and confidentiality
  - D. Purpose of multidisciplinary team members
  
- II. Obtains health and forensic history and documents thoroughly according to agency standards.
  
- III. Performs thorough patient-centered assessment, using appropriate equipment and techniques, and triages and refers when appropriate.
  
- IV. Uses proper techniques, collects appropriate evidence according to local protocol, and documents and maintains chain of custody evidence accurately, including
  - A. Skin surface specimens
  - B. Oral and anogenital specimens
  - C. Blood and urine specimens
  
- V. Uses proper techniques performs forensic photography accurately
  
- VI. Follows assessment guidelines and standardized procedures for age-specific and special populations
  - A. Adolescent patient
  - B. Adult patient
  - C. Elderly patient
  - D. Pregnant patient
  - E. Vulnerable and special needs patient
  
- VII. Provides appropriate medication administration, discharge instructions and health care referrals.
  
- VIII. Performs psychosocial assessment, including:
  - A. Crisis intervention
  - B. Safety assessment and planning
  - C. Referrals
  - D. Culturally competent approach
  
- IX. Participates in professional activities to continually improve practice, including but not limited to, chart review, peer review, ongoing education, supervision, and mentoring to prepare the nurse for the SANE role.



### Who determines competency?

Competency is determined by the preceptor that the sexual assault nurse examiner has chosen to work with. In many cases this is a supervisor or another medical professional that has experience in the field and is willing to sign off that the examiner is competent. This person must be familiar with the examiner's clinical practice either through direct observation, supervision, or peer review. Often the examiner and their preceptor will agree to a number of requirements that must be met and evaluated positively before the examiner will be deemed competent.

### How do I become a certified SANE-A?

To become a certified SANE-A, individuals must:

- Hold a full and unrestricted license as a registered nurse (RN) in the United States or a US territory OR hold a first-level general nurse in the country of practice;
- Have practiced nursing for a minimum of two (2) years as an RN or first-level general nurse in the country of licensure;
- Have successfully completed an adult/adolescent sexual assault nursing education program that:
  - Provides nursing continuing education contact hours or academic credit from an accredited educational institution
  - Follow the content outline contained in IAFN's *Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner Education Guideline*; and
  - Includes a minimum of 40 hours of course work in either the adult/adolescent patient populations OR a minimum of 64 hours of course work that includes the pediatric, adolescent, and adult patient populations
- Have undertaken supervised practice as a sexual assault nurse examiner within the past three (3) years until competency has been validated.
- Register for and successfully pass the SANE-A certification exam as outlined by the International Association of Forensic Nurses and the CFNC.



After this class will I be deemed competent to conduct sexual assault forensic exams?

No. Competency is determined by the preceptor that the sexual assault nurse examiner has chosen to work with. In many cases this is a supervisor or another medical professional that has experience in the field and is willing to sign off that the examiner is competent. This person must be familiar with the examiner's clinical practice either through direct observation, supervision, or peer review. This course only provides the initial 40 hours of course work for adult/adolescent patient populations.

After this class will I be SANE-A Certified?

No. Certification is only obtained after completing each step listed under the certification standards. After examiners have completed this course FCASV encourages examiners to pursue competency and eventually take the national exam.