



American Society of Regional Anesthesia and Pain Medicine

Pain and MSK Interventional Ultrasound Certificate

Candidate's Guide

Scope of Pain and MSK Interventional Ultrasound Certification

In recent years, one of the most important new developments in interventional pain management has been the introduction of ultrasound-guided pain procedures and musculoskeletal (MSK) injections. Real-time viewing of the target structures, the block needle trajectory, and injectate spread, as well as the critical structures to avoid, can ensure superior success and safety in pain management procedures. This is a quantum leap in technology for those interested in this pursuit, and ultrasound-guided pain intervention is drawing a large number of pain practitioners to adopt these new techniques. However, sonography images are subject to individual interpretation depending on one's experiences and training.

No formal training on pain and MSK interventional ultrasound exists in most residency and fellowship programs. As such, physicians obtain training through attending hands-on workshops and online educational activities. There is now an increasing trend for physicians to integrate interventional ultrasound in daily pain practice. Not surprisingly, payers, as well as hospital administrators, are expected to demand documented training, competency evaluation, and/or certifications.

The American Society of Regional Anesthesia and Pain Medicine (ASRA Pain Medicine) and the Pain and MSK Interventional Ultrasound Certificate Examination Board developed the eligibility requirements and examination materials for the Pain and MSK Interventional Ultrasound Certificate based on the best practices of pain and MSK interventional ultrasound documented in medical literature. This certification recognizes currently accepted levels of knowledge and expertise in pain and MSK interventional ultrasound to improve patient care.

The advancement of ultrasound technology and the range of possible clinical circumstances may give rise to other indi-

cations and approaches. ASRA Pain Medicine and the Pain and MSK Interventional Ultrasound Certificate Examination Board welcome feedback to improve the certification program, individual elements of eligibility requirements, or the written or practical exam.

Eligibility Requirements

To attain the certificate, the candidate must first provide a completed application form and fulfill all of the following six requirements.

1. Documentation of being a physician in good standing with
 - a. A valid, unrestricted license to practice medicine in the U.S. or your practicing country
 - b. Board certification in primary specialty (e.g., anesthesiology, physical medicine and rehabilitation, neurology) or equivalent
2. Letters of recommendation from two colleagues who can testify to the applicant's experience in pain and MSK interventional ultrasound and their ethical and professional standards
3. One letter of recommendation from the chair of the applicant's department or equivalent who can attest to the applicant's good standing, experience in practice, and ethical and professional standards, as well as assess the quality of the individual's independent practice in pain and MSK interventional ultrasound
4. Documentation of participation in a minimum of 20 hours of AMA PRA Category 1 Credits™ or equivalent in CME programming focused on ultrasound-guided pain and MSK intervention in the preceding two years. If the candidate attends a conference without such

PAIN AND MSK INTERVENTIONAL ULTRASOUND CERTIFICATE

specification, only the workshop hours relevant to pain and MSK intervention will be included.

5. Completed and signed procedure list (see application)
6. Attestation of adherence to ethical and professional standards (see application)

Payment of the \$150 application fee must be submitted upon confirmation of a complete application.

If eligibility is met, the candidate will be asked to pay the \$950 (member*)/\$1,300 (non-member) certification fee** prior to being scheduled for the certification exam.

Candidates in low-income and lower-middle income economies according to The World Bank will be eligible for a discounted exam fee of \$850.

Mail completed application form and all required materials to:
ASRA Pain Medicine
Attn: Certificate Application
3 Penn Center West, Suite 121
Pittsburgh, PA 15276

If you choose to submit your application via email, download and complete the application form and compile **all required application materials into one PDF attachment** and email it to asraassistant@asra.com.

Programming

Applicants must provide documentation of participation in a minimum of 20 hours of AMA PRA Category 1 Credits™ or equivalent in CME programming focused on ultrasound-guided

pain and MSK intervention in the preceding two years. Courses that have been approved for this requirement include:

- Ultrasound workshops provided at the [ASRA Pain Medicine Annual Pain Medicine Meeting](#)
- Ultrasound workshops provided by the American Society of Anesthesiologists (ASA)
- Ultrasound workshops provided by the European Society of Regional Anesthesia and Pain Therapy (ESRA), African Society for Regional Anesthesia (AFSRA), Asian & Oceanic Society of Regional Anesthesia and Pain Medicine (AOSRA-PM), and Latin American Society of Regional Anesthesia (LASRA)
- MSK workshops sponsored by the American Institute of Ultrasound Medicine (AIUM)
- Multidisciplinary International Association of Musculoskeletal Pain Ultrasound Congress (Hong Kong)
- Ultrasound Course for Interventional Pain, Musculoskeletal and Regenerative Medicine (NYSORA)
- World Academy of Pain Medicine Ultrasonography (WAPMU)

Additional courses will be evaluated for eligibility based on a strict set of requirements by an independent volunteer committee.

NOTE: *Approval of course(s) for this program does not indicate or imply ASRA Pain Medicine involvement in the development of or endorsement of those course(s).*

Policies

1. The application and supporting material must be submitted together. Candidates will be invoiced for the \$150 application fee upon confirmation of a complete submission. Forms submitted without all required materials will not be considered.
2. Only complete applications that are received by the deadline will be considered.
3. If the application is approved, the applicant will be notified that he or she has been approved as a candidate for the Pain and MSK Interventional Ultrasound Certificate exam. Applicants not accepted as candidates will not be refunded their application fee.
4. Approved candidates must submit a \$950 (member/sister society member*)/\$1,300 (non-member) exam fee** prior to being scheduled for the exam.
5. If a candidate must reschedule a scheduled exam, a \$200 rescheduling fee will be charged.
6. All correspondence will be sent to the address on the file.
7. The examination and all correspondence related to the examination will be in English.
8. Exam results are mailed to the candidate at the address on file. Candidates may provide consent for



results to be emailed to them by indicating on the application form and providing an email address.

9. Exam results will only be provided to the candidate.
10. Both the written and practical exam components have minimum passing scores. Passing scores will not be shared.
11. Candidates must pass both the written and practical portions of the exam to earn the certificate.
12. Candidates who do not pass both the written and practical portions of the exam will be notified of their scores, the minimum passing score, and areas for improvement. These candidates may reapply for the next testing period. See "Reapplying for the Examination."
13. Candidates who fail the written exam and wish to challenge the results may request that the exam be rescored and verified. Candidates must appeal within 10 days of receiving exam results.
14. All examination answer sheets will be destroyed six months after administration.

Content Outline

Successful candidates for the Pain and MSK Interventional Ultrasound Certificate should have experience practicing a wide variety of the following procedures.

- Peripheral structures
- Greater occipital nerve
- Stellate ganglion block
- Suprascapular nerve
- Intercostal nerves
- Iliohypogastric/ilioinguinal nerve block; transversus abdominis plane (TAP) block; quadratus lumborum (QL) block; erector spinae plane (ESP) block
- Lateral femoral cutaneous nerve
- Celiac plexus block
- Inguinal canal/genital branch of genitofemoral nerve block
- Pudendal nerve
- Upper extremity/lower extremity (UE/LE) peripheral nerves
- Axial structures
- Cervical selective nerve root
- Cervical facet periarticular
- Cervical medial branch



- Third occipital nerve
- Thoracic paravertebral block
- Lumbar medial branch
- Lumbar facet periarticular
- Sacroiliac joint
- Lumbar and thoracic interlaminar epidural
- Caudal and sacral foramina
- MSK applications
- Upper extremity joints: Shoulder, elbow, wrist, hand
- Lower extremity joints: Hip, knee, ankle, foot
- Muscles (e.g., piriformis)
- Bursa
- Ligaments and peritendon space
- Nerves (e.g., Morton's neuroma, Baxter nerve)
- Injection techniques (e.g., steroids, viscosupplementation, platelet-rich plasma)
- Aspiration
- Fenestration/lavage/barbotage

Recommended Texts

- Jacobson JA. Fundamentals of Musculoskeletal Ultrasound. 3rd ed. Elsevier; 2017.
- Narouze SN. Atlas of Ultrasound-Guided Procedures in Interventional Pain Management. 2nd ed. New York, NY: Springer-Verlag New York; 2018.
- Peng P, Finlayson R, Lee SH, Bhatia A. Ultrasound for Pain Management. New York, NY: Springer International Publishing; 2020.

* ASRA Pain Medicine, European Society of Regional Anesthesia and Pain Therapy (ESRA), African Society for Regional Anesthesia (AFSRA), Asian & Oceanic Society of Regional Anesthesia and Pain Medicine (AOSRA-PM), or Latin American Society of Regional Anesthesia (LASRA)

** Candidates in low-income and lower-middle income economies according to The World Bank are eligible for a discounted certification fee of \$850.

Reapplying/Renewals

Candidates who fail one or both portions of the examination process are eligible to reapply for the next available test by completing and submitting all required forms by deadline and paying all fees again. No fees will be refunded from the failed attempt. Feedback will be provided from each examination taken to assist the candidate in preparing for subsequent attempts. There is no limit to the number of times a candidate may apply for the certificate.

Confidentiality of Testing Candidates

ASRA Pain Medicine and its representatives will strive to maintain the confidentiality of applicants and candidates at all times, and any information, including application status and test results, will only be released to the candidate at the address provided.

Certificate Renewal

The Pain and MSK Interventional Ultrasound Certificate is valid for a period of ten (10) years. Candidates wishing to renew the certificate will be required to provide documentation of practice and CME and pay a renewal fee. The acronym for use if a candidate obtains the certification is ASRA-PMUC.

Frequently Asked Questions

Do you have to be a member of ASRA Pain Medicine to earn the certificate?

No, you do not have to be a member of ASRA Pain Medicine or a sister society (i.e., ESRA, AFSRA, AOSRA-PM, or LASRA) to earn the certificate. The certificate process is open to anyone fulfilling the requirements.

How much does the certificate cost?

The total cost is \$1,100/\$1,450: the application fee is \$150, and candidates who are accepted for the certificate will then be required to pay a \$950 (member/sister society member*)/\$1,300 (non-member) certificate fee, which must be paid prior to being scheduled for the exam. Candidates in low-income and lower-middle income economies according to The World Bank will be eligible for a discounted certification fee of \$850. Additional costs may be incurred to fulfill the CME requirement for eligibility. However, those costs are determined by the CME provider offering the respective course(s).

Does the certificate expire?

The certificate is valid for 10 years, after which time the physician may renew the certificate.

How long is the written exam?

The written exam consists of multiple-choice questions assessing the physician's knowledge of pain and MSK interven-

tional ultrasound techniques. Candidates will be given up to 90 minutes to complete the examination.

How long is the practical exam?

The practical examination will be held in a one-on-one setting with an examiner and will consist of multiple stations assessing knowledge, judgment, and skill in pain and MSK intervention. Candidates will be given a clinical scenario and be asked to demonstrate critical thinking, medical knowledge, scanning and injection techniques, judgment, and communication. Candidates will be given up to two hours to complete this examination.

On which procedures will I be tested during the practical exam?

You will be tested on the procedures that you use in practice, corresponding to the procedures you indicated on the "Procedure List" portion of the application.

How do I know if a CME course qualifies for the ultrasound training portion of the requirements?

A list of acceptable courses will be provided on the ASRA Pain Medicine website and updated periodically to reflect new offerings. All courses must fulfill specific requirements that are reviewed by a volunteer committee of experts on an ongoing basis. Additional courses will be evaluated for eligibility based on a strict set of requirements by an independent volunteer committee. To propose a course for evaluation, send an email to asraassistant@asra.com. The ASRA Pain Medicine administrative assistant will forward the suggestion to the committee for review and consideration.

What's the acronym I can use if I've passed the exam?

The acronym you can use is ASRA-PMUC.

If I fail the written or practical exam, can I take it again?

If a physician fails one or both components of the exam, he or she must reapply at a future date. Application fees will not be reimbursed.

Can I apply online?

If you choose to submit your application via email, download and complete the application form and compile **all required application materials into one PDF attachment** and email it to asraassistant@asra.com.

The application form can be downloaded, completed electronically, and printed out to mail, along with the other required application materials, to the ASRA Pain Medicine office at the following address:

ASRA Pain Medicine
Attn: Certificate Application
3 Penn Center West, Suite 121
Pittsburgh, PA 15276

Application



Name

Title First Middle Last

Degree(s) Organization

Address (indicate home or work)

Address State/Province Zip/Postal Code

City Country

Phone Alternate Phone

Email Address

Materials checklist.

The following materials are required at the time of application. Use this list to ensure you have provided all materials required. Indicate that you have included each item in your application.

- ☐ Documented evidence of valid, unrestricted license to practice medicine.
- ☐ Documented evidence of having achieved Board certification in primary specialty (e.g., anesthesiology, pain, physical medicine and rehabilitation, neurology) or equivalent.
- ☐ First letter of recommendation from colleague who can testify to your experience in Pain and MSK Interventional Ultrasound and your ethical and professional standards. Name of colleague: _____
- ☐ Second letter of recommendation from colleague who can testify to your experience in Pain and MSK Interventional Ultrasound and your ethical and professional standards. Name of colleague: _____
- ☐ Letter of recommendation from chair of your department or equivalent who can attest to your good standing, experience in practice, and ethical and professional standards as well as assess the quality of your independent practice in Pain and MSK Interventional Ultrasound. Name of colleague: _____
- ☐ Certificate(s) of completion of a minimum of 20 hours of *AMA PRA Category 1 Credits™* or equivalent in pain and MSK ultrasound-guided CME programming.

Add additional sheets if necessary.

Name of course	Sponsor	# Hours
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

By signing and dating below, I hereby attest to the following.

Total Number of Credit Hours: _____

- The information provided in this application is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge at the time of this application. I understand that any attempt to mislead or misrepresent an application for this certificate program is strictly prohibited and may result in permanent loss of the certificate or the ability to apply, test, or hold the certificate in the future.
- My license to practice, my clinical privileges, my employment status, and my prescribing privileges have never been limited, suspended, revoked, denied, or subject to probation in any jurisdiction, nor have I ever voluntarily relinquished my clinical privileges or license to practice for any reason.
- I have never been convicted of a felony related to the practice of medicine or patient care.
- I have never been sanctioned for professional misconduct by any hospital, healthcare institution, or medical organization.
- I have not received a malpractice judgment or been involved in a malpractice settlement in the last five years.
- I do not and have not had a substance abuse problem, mental health condition, or physical condition that has impacted my ability to practice medicine.
- I hereby pledge to adhere to the highest standards of personal conduct; promote and encourage the highest standards of ethics in medical practice; adhere to all applicable federal, state, and local laws; and adhere to all ASRA Pain Medicine requirements in regard to the practice of procedures, techniques, and standards represented by this certification process. I understand and agree that failure to comply with the statements and standards agreed to herein are grounds for revocation of the certificate and may be grounds for refusal to apply, test, or hold the certificate in the future.

Signature Date

Procedures List

Circle "Yes" or "No" next to each of the following procedures to indicate if you have performed the procedure. For those procedures that you have performed, indicate those which you have done in the last 12 months.

Performed?		In the last year?	Procedure
Yes	No	If yes, place an "X" on line	
			Peripheral structures
Yes	No	_____	Greater occipital nerve
Yes	No	_____	Stellate ganglion block
Yes	No	_____	Suprascapular nerve
Yes	No	_____	Intercostal nerves
Yes	No	_____	Iliohypogastric/ilioinguinal nerve/TAP block
Yes	No	_____	Lateral femoral cutaneous nerve
Yes	No	_____	Celiac plexus block
Yes	No	_____	Inguinal canal/genital branch of genitofemoral nerve block
Yes	No	_____	Pudendal nerve
Yes	No	_____	UE/LE peripheral nerves
			Axial structures
Yes	No	_____	Cervical selective nerve root
Yes	No	_____	Cervical facet periarticular
Yes	No	_____	Cervical medial branch
Yes	No	_____	Third occipital nerve
Yes	No	_____	Thoracic paravertebral block
Yes	No	_____	Lumbar medial branch
Yes	No	_____	Lumbar facet periarticular
Yes	No	_____	Sacroiliac joint
Yes	No	_____	Lumbar and thoracic interlaminar epidural
Yes	No	_____	Caudal and sacral foramina
			MSK Applications
			Target
Yes	No	_____	Joints: large, intermediate, and small
Yes	No	_____	Muscles
Yes	No	_____	Bursa
Yes	No	_____	Ligaments and peritendon space
Yes	No	_____	Nerves (e.g., Morton's neuroma, Baxter nerve)
			Techniques
Yes	No	_____	Injection (e.g., steroid, viscosupplement, PRP)
Yes	No	_____	Aspiration
Yes	No	_____	Fenestration/lavage/barbotage

The above information is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge at the time of this application. I understand that any attempt to mislead or misrepresent an application for this certificate program is strictly prohibited and may result in permanent loss of the certificate or the ability to apply, test, or hold the certificate in the future.

Signature

Date