

Dear Prospective Student,

If you are receiving this, Congratulations and thank you for considering this program. I hope that you will give IAU serious consideration when deciding which CRNA program you want to attend.

Being a former student from the States, I understand what it is like to pick up and move to an island that I didn't really know much about. Hopefully the following information will answer a number of your questions and help you with the application process. The process can be quite tedious but knowing how to go through it will help immensely.

Applying to the School

Make sure to get ALL of the paperwork turned in before the application deadline!

If you have any questions, you will find Patricia to be a wealth of knowledge and very willing to help you.

Interview

If you are invited to come and interview at IAU, make sure to come well dressed. Men should wear a suit, tie and dress shoes. Women should be dressed in business professional's attire. Please, ask any questions during the interview that you have about the program (how it is organized, clinical sites, expectations, etc.). They will be more than happy to answer any questions that you may have.

Although many people will be interviewed the same day, interviews are conducted on an individual basis between you, Professor Josué Ramos, CRNA, Program Director and Professor Iván Molina, CRNA, Clinical Director.

If you are not fluent in the Spanish, the interview may be performed in English.

The GPS Coordinate of IUA-Arecibo Campus is: N18 28.436 W066 45.553

Hotels

Hotels that you may consider while you are here could be in San Juan or Arecibo.

Dreams Hotel (San Juan)

www.dreamshotelpr.com

The following 2 are both about 10 min from the school and in good condition.

El Buen Café (Arecibo/Haitilo)

www.elbuencafe.com

Car Rental

You will need to rent a car while you are here to get around. We have all of the same major rental companies that are in the States (Enterprise, Avis, etc.) If you have made contacts with another student(s), you can split the cost. Most car rentals companies have shuttles that will pick you at the airport.

Housing

Some US students live in the Arecibo, Dorado or San Juan. All Full-time students will be in didactic class 2 days a week for the 1st year (August through May). Starting the 2nd Semester, Full-time students will start clinical 1 day per week. Part-time students are in didactic class 1 day a week for the 1st year and will not start clinical until the 4th Semester. After the 1st Semester of clinical both Full-time and Part-time students then progress to clinical 4 days a week and didactic class 1 day a week. At that time, you may want to consider moving closer to your clinical site.

Housing varies from place to place, like anywhere in the US. Just remember, you get what you pay for. In general, however, most students end up paying between \$500-\$800/month. You will find places above and below that but I would say that that is the general range.

Some apartments and houses will be furnished, include water, electricity and internet. But, most will not. If the rental ad says "laundry" make sure there is an existing washer and dryer. It may mean there is a hook up for them, but they aren't included. Many rentals do not come with AC. Most US students want AC. Electricity is very expensive here, so keep that in mind when you are putting your budget together. All contracts are different. Let Realtors know what you want and they will try to accommodate you.

You can look at www.craigslistpr.com for housing, but most Puerto Ricans use www.clasificadosonline.com

Car

You will need your own car if you are accepted here. Public transportation is not reliable and does not operate in Arecibo. If you live in Dorado or San Juan, you will be commuting to Arecibo for didactic class and exams, like most of us do.

You have a couple of options when it comes to cars: transport yours from the US or buy one here.

It may be very hard to find a reliable used car here. Also, everything here is more expensive since it is imported. I have seen numerous students purchase cars here and end up with a lemon. I brought a reliable car from the US. My suggestion is that if you have a reliable car, bring it.

If you want to bring yours, it has to be paid off and you will need to find a company to transport it. Also, you will need to pay an import tax once it is here to be able to pick it up at the Port. That tax will vary depending on the year, model and make of the car (\$850 to \$1,500). Before picking your car up at the Port of San Juan you will need to go to Departamento de Hacienda. The GPS Coordinates are: N 18 25.624 W066 03.843 This is where you will pay the import tax on the car.

This website should help you figure out how much that should be:

http://www.hacienda.gobierno.pr/vehiculos/eng_index.html

The license plate and registration will cost you an additional \$170.00

Car shipping lines

<http://www.seastarline.com/>

<http://www.larosadelmonte.com/> La Rosa is cheaper, but takes longer

If you decide to ship your car. You will be picking it up at the Port of San Juan. The GPS Coordinates are:

N18 25.865 W066 05.676

If your car is not paid off or you decide you want to purchase one here in PR you can also use

www.classificadosonline.com

Car Insurance

When you register your car yearly, you will be buying liability insurance through the government as well. You may want to purchase private insurance in addition to that.

The registration that you purchase goes with the car, not with you. So, you may end up buying a car that is still registered for 6 more months, which is great. You don't have to register it again until it expires but you do have to stand in line and change it into your name. You will go to DTOP to do that, which is located in Carolina or Bayamón; both are suburbs of San Juan. Their website is:

<http://www.dtop.gov.pr/>

The GPS Coordinates for DTOP Bayamón are: N18 22.613 W066 08.627

Additional auto insurance information can be found: <https://www.doralbank.com/en/insurance/doral-auto-insurance.aspx>

Tolls

If you're from TX, FL or PA you'll be very familiar with tolls. All of the freeways here have tolls. It is a must to purchase an Auto Expreso that attaches to your windshield so that you won't have to stop and pay every time you go through them. The warning lights will turn green as you go through. Once it turns yellow, you have \$5 left on your tab.

Summer Course

When you come for the interview, you will be required to take an Anatomy and Physiology test. If you pass that test, you don't have to take the Summer A & P course. Don't worry, no one has ever passed the test, so be prepared to spend 4 weeks here in the Summer.

The Summer course is a review of A & P, but is designed to prepare you for the 3 Pathophysiology courses that you will be taking during the program. The course runs the entire month of June. I recommend coming at least a week early to get adjusted. You must pass the course with a B to progress into the CRNA program, which will start in mid August.

Loans

You can take approximately \$26,500 in loans per year, as a Full-time student. Part-time students receive \$18,500. The regular subsidized federal loan is \$20,500 and the Grad PLUS loan is an additional \$6,000. You will receive this in 3 installments; Fall, Spring and Summer. PR has the same loans as we do in the US (FAFSA, subsidized, unsubsidized, etc.). The school code for FAFSA is 005026

Tuition

Being that IAU is a private school, the tuition rates are the same no matter where you are from. Right now, the total tuition for the program, including the Summer course, is around \$16,500. IAU is \$202.00 per credit hour. Then add additional fees (which can be significant), books, office supplies, clinical supplies. As you can see, it is significantly cheaper than most of the other schools in the States.

No Hablas Español?

So, what is it like coming here and not speaking a lick of Spanish? Well, the simple answer to that is, challenging but doable.

All of the textbooks and tests are in English (the boards are in English). However, the classes are taught in Spanish. So, you may not get a lot from the lectures, but most Professors will answer your questions in English.

You will need to learn some Spanish to be able to communicate with your patients once you begin clinical. All of your preceptors should be able to get by in English, so that will help.

There are many of us in the program that don't speak Spanish and we do great. You must realize this is a self study program and that you will be teaching yourself a lot from the textbooks. That is common not only here, but in most Graduate education.

Most people speak some English in PR. I notice the further you get from the Metropolitan area the understanding of English is less. In most places, you can get by. You are the minority, so learn some Spanish!

Clinicals

Currently, there are 6 clinical sites. They are located in Guaynabo, Caguas, Bayamón, Ponce, San Germán and Manatí. Both the Program Director and Clinical Director will attempt to place you close to your home. At this time, we are the only accredited program in PR. That being said, clinical conditions vary from hospital to hospital, but the University has chosen the best of Puerto Rico and you will find there are great learning opportunities here.

Accreditation

Please do your research! This Program has been accredited by the COA since its opening in 1996. The agency accredits all US Schools.

<http://home.coa.us.com/Pages/default.aspx>

Level of Teaching

The IAU Anesthesia Faculty consists of three CRNA's and three adjunct PhD Professors that teach the other subjects (Pathophysiology, Biochemistry, Physics and Research). Every program has its own way of relaying its information to its students. At IAU they instruct with Power Points, student presentations and question and answer. Like any Graduate Program, the large majority of the learning falls on your shoulders. If you don't put in the work, you will never become a good CRNA. They do everything they can to help you, but it ultimately depends on you. They are very good instructors and they will help you as much as they can, but they will not pass you if you do not deserve it. Period! Please understand that just because this school is in the Caribbean and outside of the Continental US that it will not be a walk in the park, or you will be setting yourself up for failure. It is VERY rigorous and will take all of your effort to do it well. But, if you do your part, you will find that it's a great program and you will come out very prepared to take the boards.

Tests

Tests will be both written (multiple choice or essay) and verbal between you and the Professor. They will ask you questions and you will explain what you know. They may be conducted in either English or Spanish. It's your choice.

Working in the US

Many of you will want to return to the US upon graduation and are wondering if you are going to find it difficult to find work if you're a graduate from IAU. Before I came here, I contacted six Level I Trauma Centers throughout the US and spoke with their HR Departments. I was always told that as long as I was licensed as a CRNA, I would be considered a qualified candidate. Additionally, I have spoken to other students that have graduated from this program and all of them found jobs without difficulty.

License

In order to start clinical in PR, you must have a PR Nursing License. It is important that you start on this process early. Patricia should send you a copy of a list that I gave her with all of the requirements.

A few hints for you: make sure and send them **ALL** of the paperwork that they need (except the HS transcript if you were born in the US). If you were born outside of the US, but have become a US Citizen or have a Green card you will need a HS transcript. Some of it sounds redundant, and it is, but you have to do it. Make sure you have at least 2 copies of everything!

When you order your paper from the nursing boards to verify that you passed the NCLEX, MAKE SURE that it says the word "passed" on it. Otherwise they won't accept it.

All things may be sent directly to the Nursing Board Office or delivered in person. If they are delivered in person, make sure that the envelopes are still sealed, otherwise they are invalid.

When you order transcripts and other papers, have them send one to the boards as well as to you. Many, many, many people have had experiences of them "losing" or "not receiving them". So, have one sent to you as well and that way you will have an extra in case you ever need it.

You will need a criminal background check from PR. You do and can get one by going to this website: <http://www.pr.gov/citizenportal/040-007-000-000.htm?TRX=040007000000> Keep this address, you will be giving a new copy of this every 6 months to Patricia.

Click on:

"Formula en linea" It's not always working, but hopefully it is when you try. Just follow the instructions.

Fill in your info and they will send you an email with your results. Print it off and send it to them.

Being that you are not from here, you will also need a background check from wherever you are from. For example, if you live in Miami-Dade County, send 1 from there. That has to be sent directly to them as well.

The \$50.00 that you have to send them will need to be in a money order form.

Something to note: calling them is completely futile. They do not answer the phone. So, you can either go to them in person (when you come to the interview) or email a woman named Carmen.

She is very nice and is fairly good at responding to your questions, but it will probably take her a few days. Her email address is: carmencolon@salud.gov.pr

The mailing address is:

Junta Examinadora de Enfermeras y Enfermeros
PO Box 10200
Santurce, PR 00908-0200
787-999-8989, ext 3464
jrosa@salud.gov.pr

The physical address is:

1590 Avenue Ponce de Leon
San Juan, 00926, Puerto Rico

The GPS Coordinate when you arrive is: N18 22.841 W066 04.110

To pick up your license once it is done, you will need an ASUME letter and a money order for \$30 (I think it is). The ASUME is to prove that you don't owe any child support in PR. You can get one by going to this website; it works the same as the criminal background check:

https://serviciosenlinea.asume.gobierno.pr/ASUME_SERVICIOS/

Click on:

“Acepto los términos y condiciones”

“Registarse”

Fill in the info

“Registrar usuario”

The nursing office can be quite tricky to find. The Nursing Department is on the 3rd floor. Register with the security guard there at the desk and he will direct you to where you need to go. Depending on when you go. It is VERY important to get there early (6:30 AM). They only see a certain number of people and if you are not one of them, you've wasted a trip. Oh, and make sure that the day you want to go is not a PR holiday, both of which I have done.

Colegiación

Now, once you have your nursing license, you have to get it “colegiado”, not sure what it is in English but it mainly means you have to pay more money, otherwise your license is not valid. Once you leave the Nursing Department, you can get the Security Guard on the 3rd floor to give you a map. The Colegiado told me that starting Jan 1, 2013 you will be able to pay for this yearly online.

Get that completed ASAP and give all of your documents to Patricia. It is \$45.00 per year, but you can buy multiple years at the same time so that you don't have to keep going back every year. You can pay this fee with major US credit cards.

Their physical address is:

Colegio de Enfermería de Puerto Rico
Urb Roosevelt,
Calle Arrigoitia Esquina Salaman
San Juan, PR,
(787) 753-7197

The GPS Coordinate is: N18 25.753 W066 05.217

Health Certificate

You will need a health certificate in order to start the program. You can ONLY get that in PR. It is based entirely on two lab results: TB and Syphilis. Your VDRL and PPD results from the US will not be accepted. You must turn in original copies to Patricia upon your admittance to the program.

A great place that you can go and get everything done fast is Dr. Marcano's office in Arecibo.

His address is:

115 Calle Ariosto Cruz
Arecibo, PR 00612
787-878-3151

When you get there, ask to talk to "Martí". She's the charge nurse there. Tell her you need to get a health certificate and that Greg from the anesthesia program sent you (really, it will help). She is VERY nice and speaks wonderful English. It should cost around \$35 for all of it, if I remember correctly.

There are also numerous clinic's throughout the island where you can have it done as well.

Cultural Experiences

Some of the benefits of coming to Puerto Rico to study, besides the beaches and nice weather, are all of the cultural experiences that you will have. There will be brand new foods, customs, dances, music and idiosyncrasies that you will be exposed to. It will be a wonderful opportunity to learn and grow. It is extremely important to see them with an open mind. Just because it's different than how you do it, doesn't mean it's bad. Be adaptable. You will find it very challenging, but if you learn to enjoy the differences, you will love it here. It will take some getting used to, just realize it is NOT the US and you'll be fine.

Lines

Everything in PR is done by getting in line and taking a number, EVERYTHING! You will know what I mean when you get here. I always go early to appointments (6:30-7:00 AM).

I hope this answers some of the questions. I can honestly say that I am very glad that I decided to come here. I was accepted to 2 US Schools and here and ultimately decided to come here. There is not such a thing as a perfect school. You must find the best fit for you! This school is definitely worth looking at.

I wish that I had the time to meet you in person and talk to you individually about the program but I simply don't. The program is intense and I'm very busy studying for tests.