



## 2011 NCLEX® Examination Candidate Bulletin

This bulletin contains information for all registrations and scheduling of NCLEX examination appointments beginning January 1, 2011.

Additional information is available at [www.ncsbn.org](http://www.ncsbn.org)

**Do not discard before receiving your test results.**



### Contact Pearson VUE for questions regarding:

- Registering to take the NCLEX examination
- Authorization to Test (ATT) Letter
- Lost ATT Letter
- Scheduling/rescheduling an exam appointment
- Acceptable forms of identification
- Comments about the test center

**Visit:** NCLEX Candidate website, <http://www.pearsonvue.com/nclex>

**Call:** NCLEX Candidate Services (Pearson VUE)

**United States** – Call at (toll-free) 1.866.49NCLEX (1.866.496.2539), Monday – Friday, 7 am to 7 pm, U.S. Central Time.

**Asia Pacific Region** – Call NCLEX Candidate Services in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, at (pay number) +603.8314.9605, Monday – Friday, 8:30 am to 6 pm, Universal Time.

**Europe, Middle East, Africa** – Call NCLEX Candidate Services, at (pay number) +44.161.855.7445, Monday -Friday 8 am to 6 pm, Central European Time.

**India** – Call NCLEX Candidate Services at (pay number) 91.120.439.7837, Monday-Friday 9 am to 6 pm, IT.

**All other countries not listed above** – Call (pay number) 1.952.681.3815, Monday - Friday, 7 am to 7 pm, Central Time.

**Candidates with hearing impairments** who use a Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD) – Call the U.S.A. Relay Service at (toll-free) 1.800.627.3529 or the Canada & International Inbound relay service at (pay number) 605.224.1837. These services are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

**Write:** NCLEX Examination Program  
Pearson Professional Testing  
5601 Green Valley Drive  
Bloomington, MN 55437-1099

**DO NOT SEND 3rd Party Payments to the above address.**

**E-mail:** [pvamericascustomerservice@pearson.com](mailto:pvamericascustomerservice@pearson.com).

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### Contact the National Council of State Boards of Nursing, Inc. (NCSBN) for questions regarding:

- NCLEX examination development
- General NCLEX examination information
- Unresolved concerns related to examination administration

**Visit:** NCSBN website, <http://www.ncsbn.org>

**Write:** National Council of State Boards of Nursing, Inc.  
Examinations Department  
111 E. Wacker Drive, Suite 2900  
Chicago, Illinois 60601-4277

**Call Examinations Department:** 866.293.9600

**Fax Examinations Department:** 312.279.1036

**E-mail:** [nclexinfo@ncsbn.org](mailto:nclexinfo@ncsbn.org)

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### Contact your board of nursing for questions regarding:

- Name or address changes
- Name corrections on your ATT letter
- Licensure
- Endorsement

**Write or call your board of nursing.** Links to all boards of nursing websites and contact information is available on the NCSBN website: [www.ncsbn.org](http://www.ncsbn.org); click on the link titled **Boards of Nursing**.

Examination results are sent to you by your board of nursing. Wait a minimum of four weeks following your examination for your results to arrive in the mail.

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## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

In April 1994, nurse licensure candidates began taking the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX®) on computers at test centers located across the United States (U.S.) and select international sites. The change to computerized adaptive testing (CAT) for the nurse licensure examination came about as a result of a decision made in August 1991 by the National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN®). The NCLEX examinations are only provided in the CAT format.

The NCLEX examination is designed to test knowledge, skills and abilities essential to the safe and effective practice of nursing at the entry level. NCLEX examination results are an important component used by boards of nursing to make decisions about licensure. **Only boards of nursing can release NCLEX examination results to candidates.**

The NCLEX examination is given on a computer. You are not expected to know how to use a computer before you take the examination. An on-screen calculator will be available during the examination. The majority of NCLEX examination items are multiple choice but there are other formats as well. **All item types are scored as either right or wrong. There is no "partial credit."** A tutorial will be included as part of the examination that will instruct you on the use of the mouse and how to record an answer.

Both the NCLEX-RN® and the NCLEX-PN® are variable length adaptive tests. The NCLEX examinations are not offered in paper-and-pencil or oral examination formats. An NCLEX-RN examination can be anywhere from 75 to 265 items. Of these items, 15 are pretest items that are not scored. Regardless of the number of items administered, the time limit for this examination is six hours. An NCLEX-PN examination can be anywhere from 85 to 205 items. Of these items, 25 are pretest items that are not scored. The time limit for this examination is five hours. It is important to note that the time allotted for the examination includes the tutorial, the sample items, all breaks (restroom, stretching, etc.) and the examination. All breaks are optional.

## WHAT'S NEW IN 2011?

### 2011 NCLEX-PN® Test Plan

The 2011 NCLEX-PN® Test Plan was approved by the NCSBN Delegate Assembly in August 2010 and was posted on the NCSBN website, [www.ncsbn.org/1287.htm](http://www.ncsbn.org/1287.htm), shortly thereafter. This new test plan goes into effect on April 1, 2011. The format of the test plan was retained and only minor edits were made for currency and clarification.

## REGISTERING FOR THE EXAM

### REGISTRATION PROCESS OVERVIEW

1. Submit an application for licensure to the board of nursing where you wish to be licensed.
2. Meet all of the board of nursing's eligibility requirements to take the NCLEX examination.
3. Register for the NCLEX examination with Pearson VUE.
4. Receive Acknowledgement of Receipt of Registration from Pearson VUE.
5. The board of nursing makes the candidate eligible to take the NCLEX.
6. Receive Authorization to Test (ATT) letter from Pearson VUE.

If you choose to provide an e-mail address at the time of registering for the NCLEX examination (whether by mail, telephone or via the Internet), please note that all correspondence from Pearson VUE will arrive **ONLY** by e-mail. If you do not provide an e-mail address when you register, correspondence from Pearson VUE will arrive **ONLY** through U.S. mail.

If more than four weeks have passed after you have submitted a registration for an NCLEX examination, received acknowledgement from Pearson VUE, and you have not received an ATT letter, please call Pearson VUE NCLEX Candidate Services at the appropriate number listed on the inside front cover.

Note: For program code information, please reference the NCSBN website at [www.ncsbn.org/1213.htm](http://www.ncsbn.org/1213.htm). If the code for your program is not listed, please contact your board of nursing.

## TEST FEES AND POLICIES

### Fee

The fee for taking the NCLEX examination is \$200. You will also have to pay other licensure fees required by the board of nursing in the jurisdiction in which you are applying. You must contact your board of nursing to find out about these fees. If you choose to schedule your NCLEX examination at a test center outside of the U.S.\*, you will have to pay an additional international scheduling fee of \$150, and where applicable, a Value Added Tax (VAT). These fees will be charged when you schedule your examination appointment.

After registering, candidates who want to change the board of nursing where licensure was requested or the type of examination requested (RN/PN) will be required to pay a \$50 change fee.

\*U.S. includes American Samoa, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

### No Refunds

**There will be no refund of registration fees (mail, telephone, or via the Internet) for any reason, including, but not limited to:**

- Duplicate Registrations
- Failure to reschedule and/or cancel your exam appointment outside of 24 business hours
- Failure to appear for your appointment

**Do not submit another registration and fee before calling.** If you decide to submit an additional registration, first stop payment on the original payment.

Additionally, there will be no refund of the \$150 international scheduling fee or VAT for any reason.

### Failure to Pay

A candidate may not take the NCLEX examination if the registration fee has been stopped, cancelled or otherwise revoked, either by the candidate or a financial institution. If payment is stopped after the candidate takes the examination, NCSBN and the boards of nursing reserve the right to hold and/or revoke the candidate's result.

### Registration Time Limit

All NCLEX examination registrations will remain open for a 365-day time period during which a board of nursing can determine a candidate's eligibility. The time period begins when the board of nursing receives the candidate's registration from the test service. Once a candidate is made eligible, he or she must test within the validity dates printed on the ATT Letter.

Candidates who are not made eligible by their board of nursing within the 365-day time period will forfeit their registration, including the registration fee. Candidates who wish to take an NCLEX examination will need to reregister and repay the examination fee. You must wait until your current registration expires before reregistering. A candidate may not have two NCLEX examination registrations (of the same exam type) open at the same time.

## HOW TO REGISTER

1. **Submit an application for licensure to the board of nursing where you wish to be licensed. Be sure to meet that board of nursing's application deadline.**
2. **Register for the NCLEX examination using one of the following methods:**

## INTERNET REGISTRATION

Visit the NCLEX Candidate website ([www.pearsonvue.com/nclex](http://www.pearsonvue.com/nclex)) and select one of the following registration options:

### 1. Paying by credit card:

- You can pay for your registration by credit or debit card, using one of the following: VISA, MasterCard or American Express. Have your credit card ready when you begin your registration.

### 2. Paying by certified check, cashier's check or money order:

- Upon completion of registration, follow directions to print the confirmation document.
- Mail the confirmation document and a certified check, cashier's check or money order (made payable to the National Council of State Boards of Nursing) for \$200 in U.S. currency drawn on a bank in the U.S. to: **NCLEX Operations, PO Box 64950, St. Paul, MN 55164-0950**. Personal checks, cash, foreign currency, stamps, receipts or proofs of payment will not be accepted.
- For third-party payments from nursing schools, agencies or employers, please follow the directions on page 3.

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## U.S. MAIL REGISTRATION

Obtain a registration scan form by contacting your board of nursing (no photocopies are accepted).

You must enclose a certified check, cashier's check or money order (**made payable to the National Council of State Boards of Nursing**) for \$200 in U.S. currency drawn on a bank in the U.S. with your registration. Use the enclosed envelope to return your registration form and payment.

**Mail to: NCLEX Operations, PO Box 64950, St. Paul, MN 55164-0950.**

- Personal checks, cash, foreign currency, stamps, receipts or proofs of payment will **not** be accepted.
- We are only able to accept P.O. Box deliveries; signature confirmation of delivery is not available.

**NOTE:** Registrations that are not properly completed and/or are not accompanied by the proper payment will be returned to you and will delay your testing.

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## TELEPHONE REGISTRATION

Call Pearson VUE NCLEX Candidate Services at one of the numbers listed on the inside front cover of this candidate bulletin.

- You can pay by using a valid VISA, MasterCard or American Express credit or debit card.
- Have your credit card ready when you make your telephone call. You must provide the name shown on the credit card, the credit card number and the expiration date.

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## THIRD-PARTY PAYMENTS (Workforce Exception)

Nursing schools, agencies or employers may register and administratively pay for the NCLEX examination on behalf of the candidate. This is considered a **Workforce Exception**. If your registration is accompanied by such a payment, **do not** use the enclosed envelope to return your registration and payment.

**Please follow the instructions below:**

Write 'Workforce Exception' on a post-it note (or any note), place it on the \$200 check (**made payable to National Council of State Boards of Nursing**) and mail both the NCLEX registration form and payment to:

NCLEX Workforce Program  
Pearson VUE  
5601 Green Valley Drive, Room 220  
Bloomington, MN 55437

If you are unable to obtain a registration scan form, you may use the online certified check/cashiers check/money order payment registration option and mail the confirmation document in with the third-party payment to the mailing address above.

**NOTE:** NCSBN and Pearson VUE have established specific guidelines for this provision (Workforce Exception). Failure to follow the guidelines will result in the rejection and/or a significant delay of your registration.

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## TESTING ACCOMMODATIONS

Testing accommodations for otherwise qualified candidates can be provided only with the authorization of your board of nursing.

- Request information from your board of nursing concerning its requirements for requesting testing accommodations. This should be done before submitting your NCLEX examination registration.
- Make a request for accommodations to your board of nursing. Your request must comply with requirements established by your board of nursing for candidates requesting testing accommodations.
- Send your request to your board of nursing as early as possible so that, if approved, the testing accommodations can be made in a timely manner.

**NOTE:** Do not schedule an appointment to take the NCLEX examination until you have received written confirmation of your accommodations and your ATT letter indicating "Accommodations Granted."

Candidates approved for testing with accommodations must schedule their testing appointment through the NCLEX Accommodations Coordinator by calling Pearson VUE NCLEX Candidate Services at the telephone number listed on their Authorization to Test (ATT) letter and asking for the NCLEX Accommodations Coordinator. Candidates with accommodations may not test as walk-ins.

**NOTE:** Candidates who seek to test with accommodations cannot schedule their appointments through the NCLEX Candidate website.

## AUTHORIZATION TO TEST (ATT)

After your board of nursing declares you eligible, you will receive your ATT Letter.

**Note:** You must have your ATT letter to schedule an appointment to take the NCLEX examination and you must present your ATT letter at the test center on the day of your examination to be admitted. You will not be admitted to the examination without your ATT letter and will be required to reregister and repay to take the examination.

The ATT letter contains your authorization number, candidate identification number and an expiration date. Each ATT letter is valid for a period of time specified by the board of nursing (varies from 60 days to 365 days; however, the average is 90 days). Once the board of nursing declares you eligible to test and your ATT letter is issued, you must test within the validity dates of your ATT letter. **These validity dates cannot be extended for any reason. If you do not test within these dates you will have to reregister and repay the examination fee.**

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## YOUR EXAM APPOINTMENT

Test centers may fill up quickly because of high volumes and previously scheduled special events. Waiting to call to schedule your testing appointment may significantly limit the selection of dates from which you can choose to schedule. Additionally, if you wait until your ATT letter is close to expiring, Pearson Professional Centers (PPCs) may not be able to seat you prior to its expiration. If this occurs, you will be required to reregister and repay to take the examination.

First-time test takers will be offered an appointment within 30 days of the call, or online attempt, to schedule an appointment; repeat candidates will be offered an appointment within 45 days. If you wish, you may decline the appointment offered and schedule later than the 30 or 45 days.

If you fail to arrive for your examination appointment or fail to reschedule/unschedule without giving the appropriate notice (as outlined on page 5), you will forfeit your examination fee (and scheduling fee if applicable) and your ATT letter will be invalidated. You will be required to reregister and repay the examination fee of \$200. Your failure to take the examination will be reflected in your registration as an Incident Report which will be viewable by your board of nursing.

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## DOMESTIC SCHEDULING

You may take the examination at any NCLEX approved PPC. You can find PPC locations and addresses on the NCLEX Candidate website [www.pearsonvue.com/nclex](http://www.pearsonvue.com/nclex).

Examination appointments at test centers in the U.S., American Samoa, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands or the U.S. Virgin Islands can be scheduled through the NCLEX Candidate website or by calling Pearson VUE NCLEX Candidate Services at one of the telephone numbers listed on the inside front cover of this candidate bulletin.

- If you are using the **NCLEX Candidate website** to schedule, you will be asked to supply your user ID and password, which is provided on your Acknowledgement of Receipt of NCLEX Examination Registration. You also will be asked your preference for date and time of testing at the PPC of your choice.
- If you schedule via the **telephone**, you will be asked to supply your name and your ATT number, along with other information to verify your identity. You also will be asked your preference for date and time of testing at the PPC of your choice.
- If your first-choice date or time is unavailable, you will be offered an alternative as close to your first choice as possible.
- A **Confirmation of Appointment** will be sent to you from Pearson VUE which will contain the date, time and location of your appointment along with directions to the PPC. Verify that all the information is correct. Call or go online to check that your appointment has been scheduled or rescheduled if you do not receive a confirmation. Contact Pearson VUE NCLEX Candidate Services immediately to correct any errors to your appointment.

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## INTERNATIONAL SCHEDULING

If you choose to schedule your examination at a test center outside of the U.S.\*, you will be charged an additional non-refundable scheduling fee of \$150. If applicable, a Value Added Tax (VAT) may also be charged for this examination.

**Please be aware that once you have an appointment at a test center outside of the U.S.\*, if you decide to reschedule to a test center in the U.S., you will not receive a refund for the \$150 scheduling fee.**

Please also be aware that the list of available test centers outside of the U.S. is subject to change without prior notice. You will be notified in the event that the test center at which you are scheduled to take your examination becomes unavailable. You may reschedule the examination at another available test center. If, under these circumstances, you choose to reschedule the examination at a test center in the U.S., your \$150 scheduling fee will be refunded.

**You can only schedule an appointment for test centers outside of the U.S.\* by telephone through the Pearson VUE NCLEX Candidate Services. Walk-ins will not be accepted at test centers outside of the U.S.**

\*U.S. includes American Samoa, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

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## GROUP SCHEDULING

Group scheduling (3 or more candidates) must be done through the Pearson VUE Group Scheduling Coordinator. For further information, please contact the Group Scheduling Coordinator by e-mail at [pvgrouppreservations@pearson.com](mailto:pvgrouppreservations@pearson.com) or by fax at 952-610 5120.

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## CHANGING YOUR APPOINTMENT

If you need to change your appointment date, time or location, you may go to the NCLEX Candidate website ([www.pearsonvue.com/nclex](http://www.pearsonvue.com/nclex)) or call Pearson VUE NCLEX Candidate Services **one full business day (24 hours) before the scheduled exam date and time** as described below:

For examinations scheduled on **Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday** call at least 24 hours prior to the day and time of your appointment.

For examinations scheduled on **Saturday, Sunday or Monday**, call no later than Friday at least 24 hours in advance of your appointment time.

Candidates with appointments at test centers outside of the U.S.\* must call Pearson VUE NCLEX Candidate Services to change their appointment. Candidates who have appointments at a test center outside the U.S. may reschedule to another test center outside the U.S. without forfeiting their \$150 scheduling fee. If you choose to reschedule your examination to a test center within the U.S.\*, you will forfeit your \$150 fee.

If you have an appointment at one of the test centers in the U.S.\* and choose to reschedule to a test center outside the U.S., you will be charged a non-refundable \$150 scheduling fee and any applicable Value Added Tax (VAT).

If you are a candidate receiving testing accommodations, ask for the NCLEX Accommodations Coordinator in order to change your appointment.

**NOTE:** Leaving a message on an answering machine does not constitute giving the required notice for rescheduling or uncheduling your testing appointment. You must either reschedule or unschedule your appointment on the NCLEX Candidate website or by speaking with an agent at Pearson VUE NCLEX Candidate Services.

\*U.S. includes American Samoa, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

## PERSONAL IDENTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

- **Your ATT Letter**
- **Acceptable Identification**

**Only the identifications listed below will be accepted.** Because of the importance of the NCLEX examination, several security measures will be enforced during the administration of the examination. Strict candidate identification requirements have been established.

### Identification Requirements

When you arrive at the test center, you will be required to present one form of acceptable identification and your valid ATT letter. If you arrive without these materials, you will be turned away and will be required to reregister and repay the examination fee of \$200. If you paid the scheduling fee of \$150, that will be forfeited as well.

The only acceptable forms of identification for test centers in the U.S.\* are:

- U.S. driver's license (Department of Motor Vehicle-issued) (if expired, a renewal slip that contains a photograph and a signature must be presented in order to be admitted)
- U.S. state identification (Department of Motor Vehicle-issued)
- Passport
- U.S. Military Identification

The only identification acceptable for test centers outside of the U.S.\* is:

- Passport

All identification must be valid and not expired with signature and photograph. **All identification listed above must be in English and signed in English.**

Driver's/learner's permits or temporary identification are not accepted for admittance to the NCLEX examination.

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## IDENTIFICATION FROM A U.S. SANCTIONED (EMBARGOED) COUNTRY

Due to U.S. trade restrictions, candidates who indicate that they live in a sanctioned country are unable to be admitted to sit for the NCLEX examination. This is a federal requirement by The Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) of the U.S. Department of Treasury. For a list of countries on the U.S. economic and trade sanctions list visit [www.ncsbn.org/1221.htm](http://www.ncsbn.org/1221.htm).

### Testing at a Domestic PPC

In order to be admitted to the NCLEX examination, candidates who are testing at a Pearson Professional Center (PPC) within the U.S.\* and hold a passport from a sanctioned country, must present one of the following:

- Passport from the sanctioned country with the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) stamp (temporary I-1551), (endorsement by INS in a passport to show admission for permanent residence)
- Passport from the sanctioned country along with a U.S. Permanent Residence Card (Green Card)
- U.S. driver's license/U.S. state identification (Department of Motor Vehicle-issued)

### Testing at an International PPC

In order to be admitted to the NCLEX examination, candidates who are testing at an international PPC and hold a passport from a sanctioned country must also present proof of residency (government issued identification) from a non-sanctioned country. This only applies to candidates presenting a passport from a sanctioned country. Candidates testing internationally who reside in a non-sanctioned country can only present a passport as a form of identification.

Please visit [www.ncsbn.org/1221.htm](http://www.ncsbn.org/1221.htm) for the most up-to-date information on the U.S. Sanctioned Countries Identification Policy.

\*U.S. includes American Samoa, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

## Your Name

The first and last name printed on your identification must match **exactly** the first and last name printed on your ATT letter. If the name with which you have registered is different from the name on your identification, you must bring legal name change documentation with you to the test center on the day of your test. The only acceptable forms of legal documentation are: a marriage license, divorce decree and/or a court action legal name change document. All documents must be in **English** and must be the **original** documents. Candidates wishing to make a name change, address change or e-mail address change must contact their board of nursing. This cannot be done at the test center.

\*U.S. includes American Samoa, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

## TEST SITE RULES AND REGULATIONS

To ensure that all candidates' NCLEX examination results are earned under comparable conditions and represent fair and accurate measurement, it is necessary to maintain a standardized testing environment. The following regulations are designed to help ensure such an environment.

Below you will find the NCLEX examination candidate rules. Please note that if you do not follow the rules or the instructions of the test administrator (TA), your examination result may be withheld or cancelled, your examination fee may not be refunded and NCSBN and your licensing board may take other action, up to and including license revocation and criminal prosecution.

Examples of prohibited, irregular behavior include, but are not limited to, the following:

- You may not bring any educational, test preparation or study materials to the testing center.
- You may not access any such study materials or seek help from any other party in answering items (in person, by phone, text or by e-mail) during your examination (including breaks).
- You may not disclose to anyone, including instructors, information about the items or answers seen in your examination (this includes posting questions on the Internet and "brain dumping").
- You may not take the examination for somebody else.
- You may not tamper with the computer or use it for any function other than taking the examination.
- You may not engage in disruptive behavior at any time while in the test center.
- The following personal items are not allowed in the testing room. Personal items not allowed include, but are not limited to:
  - Any electronic devices
  - Bags
  - Books
  - Cameras of any kind
  - Cellular/mobile phones
  - Coats
  - Food or drink
  - Gloves
  - Gum
  - Hand-held computers
  - Hats
  - Lip Balm
  - Pagers
  - Personal Digital Assistants (PDA)
  - Purses
  - Scarves
  - Study Materials
  - Watches
  - Wallets
  - Weapons of any kind
- All personal items must be stored in your locker. Cell/mobile phones, pagers or other electronic devices must be turned off before storing them in a locker. Certain personal items may be accessed during breaks, like medications or food/beverages. Cell/mobile phones, pagers or any other electronic devices **may not be accessed** at all during your examination appointment (including breaks). Pearson Professional Centers are not responsible for lost, stolen or misplaced personal items.
- The TA will provide you with an erasable note board and marker before you enter the testing room. You may not write on the note board until **after** the tutorial has been completed. This is considered "brain dumping." Clean note boards can be requested during your examination by raising your hand. The erasable note board and marker may not be removed from the testing room during the examination except by the TA, and these items must be returned to the TA after the examination.
- To ensure a high level of security you will be monitored at all times. Both audio and video will be recorded.

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## GROUNDS FOR DISMISSAL OR CANCELLATION OF RESULTS

An examinee who violates the test center regulations or rules, or engages in irregular behavior, misconduct and/or does not follow the TA's warning to discontinue inappropriate behavior may be dismissed from the test center and their exam fee will not be refunded. Additionally, your exam result may be withheld or cancelled and your licensing board may take other disciplinary action such as denial of a license and/or disqualifying you from future registrations for licensure. Behaviors that are considered to constitute irregular behavior or misconduct include but are not limited to:

- Giving or receiving assistance of any kind.
- Using any prohibited aids. Prohibited aids are any devices or materials that will be helpful in taking the NCLEX examination. Examples of aids that are prohibited are electronic devices (i.e. cell/mobile phones, PDAs, hand held computers, etc.), handheld calculators, conversion tables, dictionaries, etc.
- Attempting to take the examination for someone else.
- Bringing any NCLEX examination study aids (textbooks, notebooks, classroom notes, etc.) to the testing center or accessing or attempting to access such study materials at any time after the start of the examination administration, including, but not limited to, break times.
- Failing to follow testing regulations or the instructions of the test administrator.
- Creating a disturbance of any kind.
- Copying, reconstructing or removing examination items and/or responses (in any format) or notes about the examination from the testing room or attempting to do the same.
- Tampering with the operation of the computer or attempting to use it for any function other than taking the examination.

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## CONFIDENTIALITY

Candidates should be aware and understand that the disclosure of examination items before, during, or after the examination is a violation of law. Violations of confidentiality and/or candidates' rules can result in criminal prosecution or civil liability and/or disciplinary actions by the licensing agency including the denial of licensure. If you are aware of, or have observed an attempt to compromise the NCLEX examination process, please report it to the NCLEX Test Security group. Candidates may report any suspicious behavior in the following ways:

Call Pearson VUE at 1.866.496.2539 or e-mail Pearson VUE at [pvtestsecurity@pearsonvue.com](mailto:pvtestsecurity@pearsonvue.com) or go to [www.pearsonvue.com/contact/security](http://www.pearsonvue.com/contact/security) and complete the form.

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## TEST SECURITY

NCSBN strives to report results that accurately reflect the ability of each test taker. Accordingly, our standards and procedures for administering exams have two related goals: giving test-takers comparable opportunities to demonstrate their abilities and preventing any test-takers from gaining an unfair advantage over others. To promote these objectives, NCSBN reserves the right to cancel or withhold any test results when, in its judgment, a testing irregularity occurs; there is an apparent discrepancy in, or falsification of, a test-taker's identification; a test-taker engages in misconduct, irregular behavior, violates the candidate rules or otherwise breaches his/her Confidentiality Agreement; or the results are believed to be invalid for any other reason, notwithstanding the absence of any evidence of a candidate's personal involvement in irregular activities.

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## INVALID RESULTS

NCSBN may cancel or withhold a candidate's results if, in NCSBN's judgment, there is a basis to question the validity of the results for any reason, notwithstanding the absence of any evidence of a candidate's personal involvement in irregular activities. Evidence of invalid results may include, but are not limited to unusual answer patterns or unusual score increases from one exam to another. If a candidate's result is cancelled, revoked or invalidated without a finding that the candidate engaged in irregular behavior, the candidate may appeal the decision and/or will be offered a free retest. An appeal is the candidate's exclusive means of redress with regard to NCSBN's decision to take this action.

The staff members at each PPC follow designated procedures to ensure that the operation of the test center meets NCSBN criteria for standardized testing. The following are procedures that will be adhered to when you arrive at the PPC for your NCLEX examination appointment.

## CHECK-IN PROCESS

Plan to arrive at the PPC at least 30 minutes **before** your scheduled testing time. If you arrive more than 30 minutes **after** your scheduled appointment, you may be required to forfeit your NCLEX examination appointment. Your failure to take the examination will be reflected in your registration as an incident report which will be viewable by your board of nursing.

- You will be required to present your ATT letter and a valid acceptable ID.
- You will be asked to provide your signature, a palm vein scan, and you will have your fingerprint and photograph taken. Hats, scarves and coats may not be worn in the testing room or while your photograph is being taken.
- Friends, relatives or children who accompany you to the test center will not be permitted to wait in the test center while you take the examination.
- You will be required to leave your personal belongings outside the testing room. Secure storage will be provided, however, candidates are not allowed to access any of the prohibited personal items at any time during the exam. Storage space is small, so candidates should plan appropriately. PPCs assume no responsibility for candidates' personal belongings.
- The TA will give you a short orientation and then will escort you to a computer terminal. You must remain in your seat during the examination, except when authorized to leave by test center staff. You may not change your computer terminal unless a TA directs you to do so.
- Please reference the Test Site Rules and Regulations listed above for additional information on the check-in process.

Raise your hand to notify the TA if you:

- Believe you have a problem with your computer.
- Need to change note boards.
- Need to take a break.
- Need the administrator for any reason.
- Have completed your exam.

## BREAKS

You will have up to six hours to complete the NCLEX-RN Examination, and five hours to complete the NCLEX-PN Examination; total examination time includes a short tutorial, two preprogrammed optional breaks and any unscheduled breaks you may take. The first optional break is offered after two hours of testing. The second optional break is offered after three and one half hours of testing. The computer will automatically tell you when these scheduled breaks begin. You must leave the testing room during both scheduled and unscheduled breaks. It is strongly advised that candidates not leave the test center during breaks. Additionally, when you take a break, all items accessed (including purses, wallets, etc.) may be inspected by the TA. You will be required to provide a palm vein scan before and after your break.

Note: Candidates are not allowed to access any of the prohibited personal items during breaks (including but not limited to those listed on page 7).

**All breaks count against testing time.**

## TECHNICAL ISSUES

On rare occasions, technical problems may require rescheduling of a candidate's examination. If circumstances arise causing you to wait more than 30 minutes after your scheduled appointment time, or a restart delay lasts longer than 30 minutes, you will be given the choices of continuing to wait or rescheduling your appointment without an additional fee.

- If you choose to wait, you may later change your mind at any time prior to beginning or restarting the examination.
- If you choose not to reschedule, but rather test after a delay, you will have no further recourse and your test results will be considered valid.
- If you choose to reschedule your appointment or the problem causing the delay cannot be resolved, you will be allowed to test at a later date, at no additional charge. Every attempt will be made to contact candidates if technical problems are identified prior to a scheduled appointment.

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## TESTING ENVIRONMENT

PPCs administer many types of examinations including some that require essay-type responses. PPCs have no control over noises made by candidates typing during another examination. Typing noise is considered a normal part of the computerized testing environment, just as the noise of turning pages is a normal part of the paper-and-pencil testing environment. Earplugs are available upon request.

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## WHEN THE EXAM IS FINISHED

After your examination is finished, you will be asked to complete a brief computer-delivered questionnaire about your testing experience. When you have finished the questionnaire, raise your hand to summon the TA. The TA will collect and inventory all note boards. The TA will dismiss you when all requirements are fulfilled.

If you believe there was an irregularity in the administration of your test or the associated test conditions that you believe adversely affected the outcome of your examination, you should notify the proctor or TA before you leave the test center.

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## RESULTS REPORTING

For quality control purposes, every computerized NCLEX examination is scored twice; once by the computer at the test center and then the result is verified after the examination record has been transmitted to Pearson VUE. Although the examination is scored as the candidate completes each item, NO RESULTS are released at the test center. In fact, test center staff do not have access to the examination results. Examination results are available ONLY from the boards of nursing and will be mailed to candidates approximately one month after taking the examination. DO NOT CALL your board of nursing, Pearson VUE NCLEX Candidate Services, the PPCs or NCSBN for examination results.

You can also get your “unofficial” results after 48 business hours through the quick results service available on the NCLEX Candidate website at [www.pearsonvue.com/nclex](http://www.pearsonvue.com/nclex) or by calling 1-900-776-2539.

**Note: Quick results are not available in all states and there is a fee for this service.**

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## CANDIDATE PERFORMANCE REPORT

When a candidate fails, the board of nursing sends the candidate a Candidate Performance Report (CPR). This report identifies the performance as failing, provides the number of items administered to the candidate, and a summary of the candidate’s relative strengths and weaknesses based on the test plan. This CPR is intended for failing candidates to use to help guide their study before retaking the examination.

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## RETAKE POLICY

Candidates must wait a minimum of 45 or 90 days between each examination. The policy of determining the minimum frequency within which a candidate may retake the examination is established by each individual board of nursing and NCSBN.

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## SUBMITTING COMMENTS AND FURTHER QUESTIONS

You may ask the TA for a Confidential Comment Sheet to provide any information about your testing session to NCSBN, the PPCs or Pearson VUE NCLEX Candidate Services.

If you have questions about your testing session, please contact NCSBN within two weeks of your testing appointment.

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# NCLEX TEST PLANS, TEST DEVELOPMENT AND CONTENT

## NCLEX Test Plans

The NCLEX-RN and the NCLEX-PN Test Plans are documents that describe the scope and content of the examinations. The NCLEX Test Plans can be downloaded at no cost on the NCSBN website at: [www.ncsbn.org/1287.htm](http://www.ncsbn.org/1287.htm).

## Obtaining the Detailed NCLEX Test Plan

A candidate version of the NCLEX-RN and NCLEX-PN Detailed Test Plans can also be downloaded at no cost by accessing the NCSBN website at: [www.ncsbn.org/1287.htm](http://www.ncsbn.org/1287.htm).

## Test Content

The practice of nursing requires knowledge of the health needs of clients as well as an understanding of integrated processes fundamental to nursing practice. Client Needs are used as the framework for both RN and PN test plans. NCLEX-RN and NCLEX-PN examinations may include items written at various cognitive levels.<sup>1,2</sup> The majority of items are written at the application or higher levels of cognitive ability. In general, if the age or age category of the client is not stated in an item, it can be understood that the client is an adult.

<sup>1</sup> Bloom, B.S. (ed). (1956). *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives: The Classification of Educational Goals, Handbook 1. Cognitive Domain*. New York: David McKay Co, Inc.

<sup>2</sup> Anderson, L.W., Krathwohl, D.R. (eds).(2001). *A taxonomy for learning, teaching and assessing. A revision of Bloom's taxonomy of educational objectives*. New York: AddisonWesley Longman, Inc.

## Developing the Examination

Steps in the development of the NCLEX examination are outlined below.

1. To determine the basis for safe and effective entry-level nursing practice, NCSBN conducts a practice analysis of entry-level nurses every three years. The legal scope of nursing practice and results of the practice analysis are used to develop an NCLEX test plan. Test plans, which outline the content categories and percentage of test items allocated to the categories, reflect the job-related knowledge, skills and abilities required for safe and effective entry-level job performance.
2. Item writers are practicing nurses who write items that test entry-level nursing practice for the RN or PN examination.
3. A second expert panel of practicing nurses then reviews the newly-written items. The second review is to ensure that each item reflects current entry-level nursing practice and that it is accurate.
4. All items used in an examination have been pretested and are shown to have met NCSBN statistical criteria before being used as operational (scored) items.

## Definitions

**Client** = individual, family or group.

**Nursing Diagnosis** = A classification of client needs and/or problems according to presumed natural relationships; e.g., use of North American Nursing Diagnoses Association (NANDA) Definitions and Classifications.

**Prescription** = Orders, interventions, remedies or treatments ordered or directed by an authorized health care provider.

**Exhibit** = Denotes a client chart or medical record type of item.

Additional information is available behind tabs listed on the screen. Click on a tab to review the additional information.

## Client Needs Categories Covered on the NCLEX Examinations

Four major “Client Needs” categories organize the content of the *2010 NCLEX-RN® Test Plans* and the *2011 NCLEX-PN® Test Plans*.

In the *2010 NCLEX-RN* and the *2011 NCLEX-PN Test Plans*, two of the categories are divided into a total of six subcategories. “Health Promotion and Maintenance” and “Psychosocial Integrity” do not have subcategories. The following processes are integrated into all “Client Needs” categories of the *RN and PN Test Plans*: Nursing Process, Caring, Communication and Documentation, and Teaching and Learning.

For the 2010 NCLEX-RN Test Plan	
NCLEX-RN Client Needs	Percentage of Items from each Category/ Subcategory
Safe and Effective Care Environment	
• Management of Care	16-22%
• Safety and Infection Control	8-14%
Health Promotion and Maintenance	6-12%
Psychosocial Integrity	6-12%
Physiological Integrity	
• Basic Care and Comfort	6-12%
• Pharmacological and Parenteral Therapies	13-19%
• Reduction of Risk Potential	10-16%
• Physiological Adaptation	11-17%

For the 2011 NCLEX-PN Test Plan	
NCLEX-PN Client Needs	Percentage of Items from each Category/ Subcategory
Safe and Effective Care Environment	
• Coordinated Care	13-19%
• Safety and Infection Control	11-17%
Health Promotion and Maintenance	7-13%
Psychosocial Integrity	7-13%
Physiological Integrity	
• Basic Care and Comfort	9-15%
• Pharmacological Therapies	11-17%
• Reduction of Risk Potential	9-15%
• Physiological Adaptation	9-15%

## NCLEX PSYCHOMETRICS

### Computerized Adaptive Testing (CAT)

The NCLEX examination is different than a traditional pencil-and-paper examination. Typically, pencil-and-paper examinations administer the same items to every candidate, thus ensuring that the difficulty of the examination is the same across the board. Because the difficulty of the examination is constant, the percentage correct is the indicator of the candidate’s ability. One disadvantage of this approach is that it is inefficient. It requires the high ability candidates to answer all the easy items on the examination, which provides very little information about their ability. Another disadvantage is that guessing can artificially inflate the scores of low ability candidates, because they can answer these items correctly 25 percent of the time for reasons that have nothing to do with their ability. Instead, the NCLEX examination uses Computerized Adaptive Testing (CAT) to administer the items. CAT is able to produce test results that are more stable using fewer items by targeting items to the candidate’s ability. The computer’s goal during the NCLEX examination is to determine the ability of the candidate in relation to the passing standard. Every time the candidate answers an item, the computer re-estimates the candidate’s ability. With each additional answered item, the ability estimate becomes more precise.

Each item that the candidate receives is selected from a large pool of items using three criteria:

1. The item is limited to content area that will produce the best match to the test plan percentages. It is ensured that each candidate’s exam has enough questions from each content area to match the required test plan percentages.
2. An item is selected that the candidate is expected to find challenging. Based on the candidate’s answers up to that point and the difficulty of those items, the computer estimates the candidate’s ability and selects an item that the candidate should have a 50% chance of answering correctly. This way, the next item should not be too easy or too hard and the examination can get maximum information about the candidate’s ability from the item.
3. Excludes any item that a repeat candidate has seen in the last year.

## Pretest Items

For CAT to work, the difficulty of each item must be known in advance. The degree of difficulty is determined by administering the items as pretest items to a large sample of NCLEX candidates. Because the difficulty of these pretest items is not known in advance, these items are not included when estimating the candidate's ability or making pass-fail decisions. When enough responses are collected, the pretest items are statistically analyzed and calibrated. If the pretest items meet the NCLEX statistical standards, they can be administered in future examinations as scored items.

## NCLEX Pass or Fail Decision Rules

The decision as to whether a candidate passes or fails the NCLEX-RN and NCLEX-PN examination is governed by three different scenarios:

### ***Scenario # 1: The 95% Confidence Interval Rule***

This scenario is the most common for NCLEX examination candidates. The computer will stop administering items when it is 95% certain that the candidate's ability is either clearly above or clearly below the passing standard.

### ***Scenario #2: Maximum-Length Exam***

Some candidate's ability levels will be very close to the passing standard. When this is the case, the computer continues to administer questions until the maximum number of items is reached. At this point, the computer disregards the 95% confidence rule and considers only the final ability estimate:

- If the final ability estimate is above the passing standard, the candidate passes.
- If the final ability estimate is at or below the passing standard, the candidate fails.

### ***Scenario #3: Run-Out-of-Time Rule (R.O.O.T.)***

If a candidate runs out of time before reaching the maximum number of items and the computer has not determined with 95% certainty whether the candidate has passed or failed, an alternate criteria is used.

- If the candidate has not answered the minimum number of required items, the candidate automatically fails.
- If at least the minimum number of required items were answered, the computer looks at the last 60 ability estimates:
  - If the last 60 ability estimates were consistently above the passing standard, the candidate passes.
  - If the candidate's ability estimate drops below the passing standard even once over the last 60 items, the examinee fails.

This does not mean that the candidate must answer the last 60 items correctly. Each ability estimate is based upon all previous items answered.

## Alternate Item Formats

Candidates may be administered multiple choice items as well as items written in alternate formats. These formats may include but are not limited to multiple response, fill-in-the-blank calculation, ordered response, and/or hot spots. All item types may include multimedia such as charts, tables, graphics, sound and video.

The short tutorial at the beginning of the examination will explain how to answer each of the alternate types of items.

## The Passing Standard

The NCLEX-RN and NCLEX-PN are separate examinations that reflect different scopes of practice. Accordingly, these examinations are scored on separate scales and have separate passing standards. The NCSBN Board of Directors reevaluates these standards once every three years. The criterion that the Board of Directors uses to set the standard is the minimum level of ability required for safe and effective entry-level nursing practice.

To assist the Board of Directors in making this decision, the Board is provided with information on: (1) the results of a standard setting exercise performed by a panel of experts with the assistance of professional psychometricians; (2) the historical record of the passing standard with summaries of the candidate performance associated with those standards; (3) the results of a standard setting survey sent to educators and employers; and (4) information describing the educational readiness of high school graduates who express an interest in nursing.

Once the passing standard is set, it is imposed uniformly on every test record according to the procedures laid above. To pass an NCLEX examination, a candidate must perform above the passing standard. There is no fixed percentage of candidates that pass or fail each examination.

## Similar Items

Occasionally, a candidate may receive an item that seems to be very similar to an item they received earlier in the examination. This could happen for a variety of reasons. For example, several items could be about similar symptoms, diseases, or disorders, yet address different phases of the nursing process. Alternatively, a pretest (unscored) item could be about content similar to an operational (scored) item. It is **incorrect** to assume that a second item, which is similar in content to a previously administered item, is administered because you answered the first item incorrectly. Always select the answer you believe to be correct for each item administered. All examinations conform to their respective test plan (NCLEX-RN or NCLEX-PN).

## Guessing

Rapid guessing can drastically lower your score. Some test preparation companies have realized that on certain paper-and-pencil tests, unanswered items are marked as wrong. To improve the candidate's score when they are running out of time, these companies sometimes advocate rapid guessing (perhaps without even reading the item) in the hope that the candidate will get at least a few items correct. On any adaptive test, this can be disastrous. It has the effect of giving the candidate easier items, which they also get wrong. The best advice is to: (1) maintain a reasonable pace (spending no more than one to two minutes on each item), and (2) carefully read and consider each item before answering.



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