PENNSYLVANIA STATE BOARD OF BARBER EXAMINERS

Content Outlines & Skills Lists

Theory Exam Content Outlines

Practical Skills Exam Content Outline

Practical Skills List

Teacher Practical Exam Skills List

#133901 | 05/2026

Theory Exam Content Outlines

BARBER CONTENT OUTLINE

100 scored items, 15 pretest items

I. RULES, REGULATIONS, AND SAFETY (25%-30%)

A. Safety

1. Knowledge of products, tools, and equipment
   a. Thermal appliances
   b. Patch test precautions
2. Patron protection
   a. Sanitation
   b. Procedures
   c. Professional conduct
   d. Consultation
   e. Record keeping
3. Maintaining safe working conditions
   a. Labeling
   b. Handling/storing chemical products
   c. Safety Data Sheets (SDS)
4. First aid/OSHA
   a. Handling of blood-contaminated tools
   b. Disposing of blood-contaminated objects

B. Sanitation and disinfection

1. Personal hygiene
2. Cleaning and disinfection of supplies, implements, and tools
3. Single-use items
4. Dispensing/disposal of products
5. Identifying infectious disease/referral
6. Cleaning and disinfecting work surfaces

II. HAIR/SCALP STRUCTURE AND CARE (5%-10%)

A. Properties of hair

1. Structure
2. Growth phases
3. Disorders
4. Hair loss

B. Hair type

1. Pigment
2. Wave pattern/follicle formation
3. Texture
4. Density
5. Porosity
6. Elasticity

C. Hair and scalp care services

1. Scalp analysis/disorders and diseases of scalp
2. Shampooing and conditioning
   a. Procedure
   b. Products
3. Scalp treatment/scalp massage
   a. Procedure
   b. Products

III. SHAVING/BEARD DESIGN (6%-10%)

A. Shaving safety

B. Procedures

1. Preparation
2. Shave/shaving areas
3. Post-shave

C. Techniques

1. Applying hot towels
2. Lathering
3. Shaving strokes
   a. Freehand
   b. Backhand
   c. Reverse freehand
   d. Reverse backhand
4. Beard and mustache design

D. Products and implements

IV. HAIRCUTTING AND HAIRSTYLING (25%-30%)

A. Haircutting

1. Determination of appropriate cut and style
   a. Hair texture and types
   b. Hair condition
   c. Hair length
   d. Face shape
   e. Establishing guideline
2. Blunt/one-length, graduated, and layered haircuts
3. Thinning/texturizing
4. Using scissors/shears
5. Using clippers
6. Using a razor
   a. Razor cutting
   b. Razor outlining

B. Hairstyling

1. Wet styling
2. Blow-dry styling
3. Thermal styling

4. Braiding
5. Artificial hair
6. Products and styling aids

V. CHEMICAL SERVICES (20%-25%)

A. Hair coloring
1. Color theory
2. Product chemistry
3. Materials and supplies
4. Procedures, techniques, and application
5. Precautions/patch test

B. Chemical waving
1. Product chemistry
2. Materials and supplies
3. Procedures, techniques, and application
4. Precautions

C. Chemical hair relaxing
1. Product chemistry
2. Materials and supplies
3. Procedures, techniques, and application
4. Precautions

VI. SKIN CARE (4%-8%)

A. Skin analysis
1. Conditions that benefit from facial services
2. Diseases and disorders that preclude facial services

B. Facial services
1. Purpose and procedures
2. Products, implements, and materials
3. Massage manipulations
4. Using electric skin devices and equipment
5. Special procedures for sensitive, acne-prone, or aging skin

BARBER TEACHER CONTENT OUTLINE

60 scored items, 15 pretest items

I. DETERMINING EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTION (50%)

A. Establishing goals and objectives

B. Determining essential knowledge, skills, and abilities

C. Teaching Methods and instructional tools

D. Understanding outcomes

E. Salon Management

II. THE LEARNER AND LEARNING ENVIRONMENT (34%)

A. Learning styles

B. Individual differences/Motivation

C. Record keeping

D. Classroom Management (incl. behavior)

III. ASSESSMENT TOOLS (16%)

A. Purpose

B. Methods

C. Content

MANAGER-BARBER CONTENT OUTLINE

40 scored items, 5 pretest items

I. PA BARBER LAWS AND RULES (40%)

A. Shop requirements
1. General
2. Space
3. Equipment (interior and exterior)
4. Licensing/display of license

B. Maintenance and sanitation (PA-specific)

C. Out-of-shop services

II. GENERAL SHOP MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLES (60%)

A. Safety and sanitation
1. Sanitation and disinfection
2. Maintaining safe working conditions

B. Shop operations
1. Managing employees
2. Business operations
3. Serving customers

Practical Skills Exam Content Outlines

BARBER CONTENT OUTLINE

I. INFECTION CONTROL AND SAFETY

II. SHAVING

III. SKIN CARE

IV. HAIRCUTTING

V. HAIRCOLORING/BLEACHING

VI. PERMANENT WAVING

VII. CHEMICAL HAIR STRAIGHTENING AND RELAXING

VIII. HONING AND STROPPING

Practical Skills List

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INFECTION CONTROL AND SAFETY COMPONENTS FOR ALL LEVELS:

BARBER

Infection Control and Safety

(10 minutes)

1. Arrives with disinfected implements in sealed containers and clean supplies
2. Sanitizes hands
   (This only has to be done one time before ALL skills unless the hands become unsanitary.)
3. Sanitizes work area
   (This only has to be done one time before ALL skills unless the table becomes unsanitary.)
4. Universal precautions shall be utilized to clean blood and body fluids.
5. Implements dropped on the floor shall not be used until demonstrating mock disinfection.
6. Places disposable materials in trash after use

7. Places used implements in container separate from disinfected implements
8. Sanitizes work area after completing task (This only has to be done one time at the end of ALL skills.)

Universal Precautions - For Blood Spill

1. Stops the skill immediately
2. Sanitizes hands
3. Puts gloves on
4. Cleans the wound using an antiseptic (not alcohol)
5. Bandages wound or applies styptic to stop bleeding
6. Puts all disposable items (including gloves) in one baggie labeled "biohazard"
7. That baggie must then be put in another baggie labeled "biohazard."
8. These biohazard baggies must be thrown in the candidate's own trash can and not left on the premises anywhere at the test site.
9. Candidates must sanitize hands after disposing of contaminated items.

CHEMICAL RELAXER

Chemical Relaxer - Retouch

(Barber, 15 minutes)

This will be performed on mannequins for Barbers.

1. Drapes for chemical service using chemical service cape and 2 terry cloth towels
2. Sections the hair
3. Applies base cream to the hairline and ears
4. Wears disposable gloves during application
5. Applies relaxer to regrowth
6. Cross-checks section to ensure complete coverage
7. Smooths hair with back of non-metal comb, fingers, or applicator brush
8. Keeps mid-shaft and ends free from product
9. Keeps unprotected area free from product

Chemical Relaxer - Virgin

(Barber, 17 minutes)

This will be performed on mannequins for Barbers.

1. Drapes for chemical service using chemical cape and 2 terry cloths
2. Sections the hair
3. Applies base cream to the hairline and ears
4. Wears disposable gloves during application
5. Applies relaxer approximately 1/4" from scalp out to 1/2" from ends
6. Applies relaxer to scalp area and ends
7. Smooths hair with back of non-metal comb, fingers, or applicator brush
8. Cross-checks section to ensure complete coverage
9. Keeps unprotected area free from product

FACIALS

Male Facial

(Barber, 20 minutes)

Note: Evaluators may ask candidates to perform each of the massage manipulations to ensure the evaluator sees each manipulation being performed. Candidates will NOT be marked down for demonstrating the massage manipulations before being asked, but candidates should make sure to demonstrate the massage manipulations when asked.

This will be performed on a live model.

1. Drapes model to protect clothing and hair
2. Applies and distributes cleanser in direction of beard growth
3. Avoids eye area
4. Tests temperature of steam cloth towel
5. Applies steam cloth towel to remove cleansing product
6. Applies massage product in direction of beard growth
7. Performs facial manipulations a minimum of one time on entire face
8. Performs manipulations in direction of beard growth

9. Maintains hand contact with client's skin throughout manipulations
10. Uses cushions of fingertips or palms for facial manipulations
11. Demonstrates effleurage manipulations
12. Demonstrates petrissage manipulations
13. Demonstrates tapotement manipulations
14. Applies steam cloth towel to remove massage product
15. Applies toner or astringent to skin
16. Applies moisturizer in direction of beard growth
17. Prevents cross-contamination

HAIR COLORING

Hair Color - Retouch

(Barber, 10 minutes)

This will be performed on a mannequin with a stand.

1. Drapes for chemical service using chemical service cape and 2 terry cloth towels
2. Sections the hair
3. Wears disposable gloves during application
4. Using a bottle, or brush and bowl, applies product at the scalp completely covering 1/2" to 1" of regrowth
5. Cross-checks section to ensure complete coverage
6. Removes excess color product from the skin
7. Avoids overlapping color onto previously colored hair

Hair color - Virgin

(Barber, 15 minutes)

This will be performed on a mannequin with a stand.

1. Drapes for chemical service using chemical service cape and 2 terry cloth towels
2. Sections the hair
3. Wears disposable gloves during application
4. Using a bottle, or brush and bowl, applies product 1/2" from scalp up to 1/2" from ends
5. Applies color to scalp area and ends of hair
6. Cross-checks to ensure complete coverage
7. Removes excess color product from the skin

HAIR CUTTING

Basic Layered Haircut (Shears/Scissors)

(Barber, 20 minutes)

This will be performed on a mannequin with a stand, utilizing one quadrant.

1. Drapes mannequin with a neck strip or towel and cutting or styling cape.
2. Sections the hair
3. Holds comb and cutting tool in hand(s) throughout haircut
4. Establishes and follows guideline
5. Removes a minimum of 1/2" of hair
6. Completes a blended layered haircut
7. Uses cutting tools safely
8. Cleans or sweeps area when finished

Tapered Haircut Back of Head (Scissors/Clippers)

Please see photo of finished haircut at https://www.pearsonvue.com/us/en/pa/cosmetology.html for further information.

(Barber, 20 minutes)

This haircut will be performed on a live model. The whole back of the head will be tapered, and the haircut will be blended or finished as desired. You will be graded on the overall, finished tapering.

1. Drapes model with neck strip and cape
2. Begins at 0 degrees on the base of nape
3. Tapers upwards to 2"
4. Removes at least 1/4" of hair
5. Uses cutting tools safely
6. Completes a blended taper
7. Cleans or sweeps area when finished

PERMANENT WAVING

Permanent Wave

(Barber, 15 minutes)

This will be performed on a mannequin with a stand.

1. Drapes for chemical service using chemical service cape and 2 terry cloth towels.
2. Sections the hair
3. Section width correlates with the length of the rod.
4. Sub-section correlates with the diameter of the rod size.
5. Partings are straight and clean.
6. Wraps three rods
7. Winds hair around rods evenly and smoothly
8. Fastens the band along the top of the rod, not twisted or touching the scalp
9. Applies protective cream or cotton around wrapped section
10. Wears disposable gloves during saturation
11. Curl is evening saturated for processing
12. Demonstrates mock test curl
13. Finishes without fishhooks

SHAVING

Shaving - Face and Neck

(Barber, 25 minutes)

This will be performed on a live model with a razor.

1. Drapes model with cape and terry towel
2. Tests temperature of steam cloth towel
3. Applies a steam towel to the face and neck
4. Applies lather to face and neck with hands or brush
5. Removes lather from lips, nose, eyes, and ears
6. Demonstrates freehand (in correct section of face using bladed straight razor and removing hair)
7. Demonstrates backhand (in correct section of face using bladed straight razor and removing hair)
8. Demonstrates reverse freehand (in correct section of face using bladed straight razor and removing hair)
9. Demonstrates stretching the skin taut under the razor
10. Shaves in the direction of hair growth
11. Removes lather from blade onto towel
12. Completes shaving face and neck
13. Tests temperature of steam cloth towel
14. Removes remaining lather from the face and neck with warm towel
15. Applies astringent or toner to the face and neck with a patting motion
16. Uses shaving tool safely

BARBER

Honing and Stropping

(Barber, 15 minutes)

This will be performed on a hone and strop provided by the test center. Conventional razor required.

1. Holds hone or places hone on a flat surface
2. Holds razor with index finger along the shank
3. Holds the razor flat on stone while performing the figure-eight (“8” or “X”)
4. Applies pressure while honing
5. Turns razor on back while honing, prior to reversing the blade
6. Applies pressure when stropping
7. Strops the entire blade
8. Holds razor against strop
9. Turns razor with the back leading while stropping

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LECTURE - BARBER TEACHER

1. Clearly presents lesson plan, including topic, objective, and time required
2. Objective explicitly states purpose of lesson
3. Objective delineates the knowledge, skills, and abilities students should acquire within the lesson
4. Subject matter of lesson plan is directly correlated to selected topic
5. Brings all necessary, relevant materials
6. Presents material in a linear manner
7. Visual aids are clear and easily legible
8. Begins lesson on time
9. Does not second-guess information being presented
10. Information presented is accurate
11. Describes safety and sanitation procedures of subject matter
12. Discusses theory of assigned subject
13. Discusses practical application of assigned subject
14. Summarizes subject at conclusion of lesson
15. Describes assessment methods that will be used to determine student's retention of subject matter
16. Lists students' assignment(s) to reinforce subject matter

BARBER TEACHER DEMONSTRATIONS

Male Facial Demonstration

1. Identifies equipment, implements, cosmetics, and materials that are used to perform a male facial service
2. Demonstrates preparation of client
3. Explains and demonstrates correct safety and client protection procedures
4. Reviews basic male facial procedures including application of massage product in the direction of beard growth
5. Demonstrates giving a facial with steam towels
6. Stresses proper direction while conducting the manipulations
7. Reviews proper use of implements, cosmetics, and materials
8. Establishes criteria to evaluate a quality male facial
9. Summarizes demonstration
10. Speaks clearly and distinctly
11. Follows time frame stated in lecture
12. Maintains sanitary conditions throughout

Shave Demonstration

1. Identifies equipment, implements, cosmetics, and materials that are used to perform a shave service
2. Demonstrates preparation of client
3. Explains and demonstrates correct safety and client protection procedures, including disinfection of the straight razor prior to the service and applying an astringent/toner after shaving the face

4. Explains how to prepare client's face and beard for shave
5. Reviews basic shave of face and neck
6. Demonstrates 14 shaving movements using correct strokes in the proper order on client
7. Demonstrates how and explains why holding the skin taut and proper razor angle and stroking are important in safely servicing a client
8. Reviews proper use of implements, cosmetics, and materials
9. Establishes criteria to evaluate a quality shave
10. Summarizes demonstration
11. Speaks clearly and distinctly
12. Follows time frame stated in lecture
13. Maintains sanitary conditions throughout