Pearson VUE

PENNSYLVANIA COSMETOLOGY

CONTENT OUTLINES

Current as of February 2026

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Note: State-specific content is referenced to the Regulations, Act 86 of 1933, and Act 48 of 1993 (Schedule of Civil Penalties) which can be found on the **Board's website**, and does not reflect the temporary waivers in effect due to the Governor's emergency declaration related to COVID-19.

THEORY/PROCEDURAL SKILLS EXAM CONTENT OUTLINES

CONTENT OUTLINE — COSMETOLOGIST

110 scored items (100 general, 10 state)
25 pretest items (20 general, 5 state)

I. Rules, Regulations, and Safety (27% to 32%)

A. Safety
   1. Draping
      a. Sanitation
      b. Procedures
   2. Prevention of salon accidents
      a. Maintaining safe working conditions
      b. Labeling
      c. Storing chemical products
      d. Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS)/ Safety Data Sheets (SDS)
      e. Implements/tools
   3. First aid/OSHA
      a. Handling blood-contaminated tools
      b. Disposing of blood-contaminated objects

B. Sanitation and disinfection
   1. Personal hygiene
   2. Implements and tools
   3. Single-use items
   4. Dispensing products
   5. Identifying infectious disease/referral
   6. Work surfaces

C. Client contact & communication
   1. Ethics
   2. Consultation
   3. Record keeping

II. Trichology (5% to 8%)

A. Structure of hair

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

C. Hair growth phases

III. Shampoo / Scalp Analysis (4% to 6%)

A. Purpose and chemistry of shampoos and conditioners

B. Scalp conditioning services

C. Procedures

D. Scalp massage

E. Scalp analysis/Disorders and diseases of scalp

F. Procedures for clients with special needs

IV. Styling (5% to 8%)

A. Determination of appropriate hair style
   1. Hair texture and types/Hair analysis
   2. Hair length
   3. Face shape

B. Hair design techniques
   1. Wet styling
   2. Comb out
   3. Blow-dry styling

C. Thermal styling
   1. Special considerations
   2. Tools
   3. Procedures

D. Artificial hair

E. Products and styling aids

V. Haircutting (9% to 11%)

A. Shaping and cutting principles

B. Determination of appropriate haircut
   1. Length, structure, and conditions
   2. Establishing guideline

C. Blunt/one-length, graduated, and layered haircuts
   1. Elevation
   2. Sectioning/parting

D. Thinning/texturizing

E. Using a razor

F. Using clippers/trimmers

G. Using scissors/shears

VI. Haircolor & Lightening (13% to 15%)

A. Scalp and hair conditions that preclude haircoloring or lightening services

B. Effects of hair structure and natural hair color on tone and intensity of outcome

C. Preparing hair to receive haircoloring or lightening services
   1. Patch test
   2. Strand test

D. Determining color level and tone/color theory

E. Products

F. Tools, implements, and materials

G. Formulation

H. Application, processing, and removal
I. Highlighting techniques
J. Corrective color
K. Special considerations
   1. Overprocessed or damaged hair
   2. Hair with metallic-based, compound-based, or mineral-based color

VII. Permanent Waving (12% to 14%)

A. Scalp and hair conditions that preclude permanent waving services
B. Effects of hair structure and condition on desired outcome
C. Preparation
D. Products
E. Tools, implements, and materials
F. Applying, processing, and removing products
G. Techniques of wrapping hair with rods and other tools
H. Special considerations
   1. Over processed or damaged hair
   2. Hair with metallic-based, compound-based, or mineral-based color
   3. Test curl

VIII. Chemical Straightening and Relaxing (12% to 14%)

A. Scalp and hair conditions that preclude chemical straightening and relaxing services
B. Effects of hair structure on desired outcome
C. Preparation
D. Products
E. Tools, implements, and procedures
F. Applying, processing, and removing products for chemical straightening and relaxing
G. Curl reformation/soft curl perm
H. Keratin-based smoothing treatments
I. Special considerations
   1. Overprocessed or damaged hair
   2. Hair with metallic-based, compound-based, or mineral-based color
   3. Strand test

IX. Esthetics (5% to 7%)

A. Skin conditions that preclude esthetic services
B. Skin conditions that benefit from esthetic services
C. Skin diseases and disorders
D. Special procedures for skin services on sensitive, acne-prone, or aging skin
E. Preparation
F. Tools, implements, and materials
G. Facial services
   1. Purpose and procedures
   2. Types of products
   3. Applying and removing products
   4. Using electric skin devices and equipment
   5. Extractions
H. Massage manipulations
I. Makeup application
   1. Procedures
   2. Products
   3. Removal
   4. Corrective makeup
   5. Color theory
J. Hair removal
   1. Waxing and other depilatory techniques
   2. Eyebrow shaping with tweezers

X. Nails (5% to 7%)

A. Nail structure
B. Recognizing nail disorders and diseases
C. Clients' health conditions that preclude service
D. Massage
E. Manicure/Pedicure
   1. Products
   2. Procedures
   3. Tools, implements, and materials
F. Applying, maintaining, and removing nail enhancements/artificial nails

CONTENT OUTLINE — NAIL TECHNICIAN (MANICURIST)

60 scored items (50 general, 10 state)
15 pretest items (10 general, 5 state)

I. Rules, Regulations, and Safety (30% to 40%)

A. Safety
   1. Preparation
      a. Sanitation
      b. Procedures
   2. Prevention of salon accidents
      a. Maintaining safe working conditions
      b. Labeling
      c. Storing chemical products
      d. Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS)/ Safety Data Sheets (SDS)

B. Sanitation and disinfection
   1. Personal hygiene
   2. Implements and tools
   3. Single-use items
   4. Applying creams
   5. Prevention of infectious disease
   6. Cleaning and disinfecting work surfaces
   7. Cleaning and disinfecting whirlpool pedicure foot tubs and filters

C. Client contact
   1. Ethics
   2. Communication
   3. Record keeping

II. Nail Structure and Nail Analysis (15% to 20%)

A. Nail structure

B. Nail conditions that preclude treatment

C. Health conditions that preclude treatment

III. Professional Services (30% to 40%)

A. Massage
   1. Muscles, bones, and nerves of fingers/hands/ arms
   2. Muscles, bones, and nerves of toes/feet/legs

B. Manicure/Pedicure
   1. Products
      a. Disposal
      b. Handling
   2. Procedures
   3. Tools, equipment, and materials
   4. Preparing hands and feet for services
   5. Conditioning nails and cuticles
   6. Basic manicure/pedicure
      a. Grooming and trimming cuticles
      b. Buffing
      c. Shaping
      d. Polishing

IV. Nail Enhancements (12% to 18%)

A. Application and removal
   1. Nail tips
   2. Gels and acrylics

B. Tools, equipment, and products

C. Maintenance

D. Nail Repair

CONTENT OUTLINE — ESTHETICIAN

85 scored items (75 general, 10 state)
15 pretest items (10 general, 5 state)

I. Rules, Regulations, and Safety (30% to 40%)

A. Safety
   1. Draping
      a. Sanitation
      b. Procedures
   2. Prevention of salon accidents
      a. Maintaining safe working conditions
      b. Labeling
      c. Storing chemical products
      d. Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS)/ Safety Data Sheets (SDS)
      e. Thermal/electrical appliances
   3. First aid/OSHA
      a. Handling blood-contaminated tools
      b. Disposing of blood-contaminated objects

B. Sanitation and disinfection
   1. Personal hygiene
   2. Sanitation and disinfection of implements and tools
   3. Single use items
   4. Product application
   5. Sanitation and disinfection of work surfaces

C. Predisposition/Patch Tests

D. Client contact
   1. Ethics
   2. Communication
   3. Record keeping

II. Esthetic Science and Skin Analysis (15% to 20%)

A. Skin structure and anatomy

B. Purpose of skin analysis

C. Skin conditions that benefit from services

D. Skin conditions that preclude skin services

E. Skin disorders and diseases

III. Facials (20% to 25%)

A. Application, removal, and purpose of products
   1. Lotions and creams
   2. Exfoliants
   3. Masks/packs

B. Tools, implements, materials, and equipment

C. Facial procedures

D. Special considerations
   1. Microdermabrasion
   2. Disincrustation
   3. Aromatherapy

E. Massage/Anatomy

IV. Hair Removal (16% to 20%)

A. Tweezing

B. Waxing

C. Tools, implements, materials, and equipment

V. Makeup (10% to 15%)

A. Purpose

B. Types of cosmetics

C. Brushes and other implements, tools, and materials

D. Color theory

E. Application and removal procedures

F. Corrective makeup

G. Application and removal of artificial eyelashes

VI. Electricity and Electrotherapy (5% to 10%)

A. Galvanic current

B. High frequency current

C. Light therapy

CONTENT OUTLINE — TEACHER

60 scored items (50 general, 10 state)
15 pretest items (10 general, 5 state)

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

CONTENT OUTLINE — NATURAL HAIR BRAIDER

60 scored items (50 general, 10 state)
15 pretest items (10 general, 5 state)

I. Rules, Regulations, and Safety (30-40%)

A. Safety
   1. Draping
      a. Sanitation
      b. Procedures
   2. Prevention of salon accidents
      a. Maintaining safe working conditions
      b. Labeling
      c. Storing chemical products
      d. Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS)/ Safety Data Sheets (SDS)
      e. Thermal appliances
   3. First aid/OSHA
      a. Handling blood-contaminated tools
      b. Disposing of blood-contaminated objects

B. Sanitation and disinfection
   1. Personal hygiene
   2. Implements and tools
   3. Single-use items
   4. Applying products
   5. Prevention of infectious disease
   6. Cleaning and disinfecting work surfaces

II. Client Consultation/Contact (8-12%)

A. Ethics

B. Communication/Consultation

C. Record keeping

D. Analysis to provide proper service
   1. Face shape and structure
   2. Scalp and hair analysis

III. Physiology and Trichology (18-24%)

A. Diseases and disorders of hair and scalp

B. Anatomy of the head and neck

C. Hair structure and growth cycle
   1. Hair type and wave pattern

IV. Scalp and Hair Care (10-14%)

A. Product knowledge

B. Scalp conditioning services

V. Braiding (12-16%)

A. Purpose, definitions, and techniques

B. Tools, implements, materials, and products

C. Placement, design, and direction

D. Using extensions

E. Maintenance

F. Finishing techniques

VI. Lock Style and Procedures (10-14%)

A. Purpose, definitions, and techniques
   1. Comb technique
   2. Palm roll

B. Tools, implements, materials, and products

C. Placement, design, and direction

D. Developmental phases

E. Maintenance

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