



2026 NCLEX[®] Examination

Candidate Bulletin

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Contact Information

Pearson Professional Assessments

For questions about the following items, contact Pearson:

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

Pearson Professional Assessments

NCSBN Examination Program
Pearson Professional Testing
5601 Green Valley Drive
Bloomington, MN 55437-1099

Website: <https://www.pearsonvue.com/us/en/nclex/contact.html>

Phone: Pearson NCLEX Candidate Services

United States and Canada:

Call at (toll-free) 1.866.49NCLEX (1.866.496.2539).
Monday - Friday, 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Central Standard Time
For French support, call 1.866.288.8454.

Asia Pacific Region:

Call NCLEX Candidate Services at (pay number) +852.3077.4923.
Monday - Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Hong Kong Time

Europe, Middle East, Africa:

Call NCLEX Candidate Services at (pay number) 0333.003.0765.
Monday - Friday, 09:00 to 18:00 Central European Time

India:

Call NCLEX Candidate Services at (toll-free) +91.120.439.7837.
Monday - Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Indian Standard Time

All other countries not listed above:

Call (pay number) 1.952.905.7403.
Monday - Friday, 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Central Standard 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.

National Council of State Boards of Nursing, Inc. (NCSBN®)

For questions about the following items, contact NCSBN:

- NCLEX development
- General NCLEX information
- General questions/inquiries relating to examination administration

National Council of State Boards of Nursing, Inc. (NCSBN®)

National Council of State Boards of Nursing, Inc.
Examinations Department
PO Box 5300
Scranton, PA 18505
USA

Website: www.nclex.com

Phone: (866) 293-9600

Email: nclexinfo@ncbsn.org

Join NCLEX on Facebook at www.facebook.com/NCSBNNCLEX and on X(Twitter) at <http://www.x.com/nclexinfo>.

Nursing Regulatory Body (NRB)

Contact your nursing regulatory body for questions regarding:

- Licensure/registration
- Testing accommodations and exceptions
- NRB application
- Name or address changes
- Name corrections on your ATT email

Links to NRB websites and contact information are available at <https://www.ncsbn.org/membership/us-members/contact-bon.page>. Examination results are sent to you by your NRB. It may take up to six weeks following your examination for your results to arrive.

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 is only provided in the CAT format.

The NCLEX is administered on a computer. An on-screen calculator will be available during the examination. NCLEX items have multiple formats. Candidates can familiarize themselves with the different NCLEX item types and the computer software by taking the tutorial at <https://www.nclex.com/prepare.page>. There is partial credit scoring for items for which more than one key exists. There will be three methods for scoring items for partial credit: plus/minus, zero/one, and rationale scoring.

The NCLEX is designed to test knowledge, skills, and abilities essential to the safe and effective practice of nursing at the entry level. Both the NCLEX-RN® and the NCLEX-PN®* are variable-length, computerized, adaptive tests. The NCLEX is not offered in paper-and-pencil or oral examination formats.

The NCLEX-RN and the NCLEX-PN can be anywhere from 85 to 150 items. Regardless of the number of items administered, the time limit for this examination is five hours.

It is important to note that the time allotted for the examination includes the introductory screen, all breaks (restroom, stretching, etc.), and the examination. All breaks are optional.

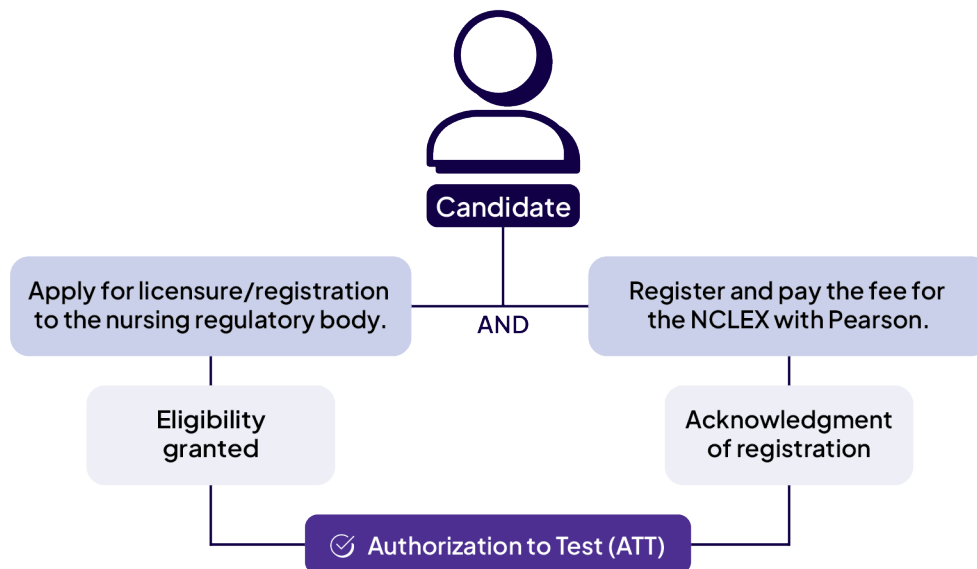
NCLEX results are an important component used by nursing regulatory bodies (NRBs) to make decisions about licensure/registration. Only NRBs can release NCLEX results to candidates.

This NCLEX candidate bulletin contains information for all registrations and scheduling of NCLEX appointments. Additional information is available at www.nclex.com.

*The NCLEX-PN is used for U.S. licensure only.

Exam Registration

NCLEX® Registration Process Overview



To register for an NCLEX exam,

1. Submit an application for licensure/registration to the nursing regulatory body (NRB) where you wish to be licensed/registered.

Note: For testing accommodations or exception requests, candidates should inquire and submit those requests to their desired nursing regulatory body at the time that they are applying for licensure/registration.

2. Meet all of the NRB's eligibility requirements to take the NCLEX.
3. Register for the NCLEX with Pearson.
4. Receive an NCLEX Registration Acknowledgment email from Pearson.
5. The NRB makes you eligible in the Pearson system.
6. Receive an Authorization to Test (ATT) email from Pearson.
7. Schedule your exam with Pearson.

Please note that all correspondence from Pearson will arrive only by email. If more than two weeks have passed since you have submitted a registration for the NCLEX and received acknowledgment from Pearson, and you have not received an ATT email, you may want to contact your NRB to ensure all necessary materials have been submitted and received or to find out why they have not granted your eligibility.

For educational program code information, please reference the Registration web page at <https://www.nclex.com/registration.page>. If the code for your program is not listed, please contact your NRB.

Test Fees and Policies

Fee	Candidates seeking U.S. licensure	Candidates seeking Canadian licensure/ registration	Candidates seeking Australian licensure
Registration fee	\$200 USD	\$360 CAD (excludes local taxes)	\$200 USD
Additional international scheduling fee (plus a value-added tax (VAT) if applicable)	\$150 USD	\$150 CAD	\$150 USD
Change nursing regulatory body after registration fee	\$50 USD	\$50 CAD	\$50 USD
Change exam type (RN/PN) after registration fee	\$50 USD	Not applicable	Not applicable
Change exam language (English/French) after registration fee	Not applicable	\$50 CAD	Not applicable
Licensure/registration fee	Contact nursing regulatory body	Contact nursing regulatory body	Contact nursing regulatory body

Refund Policy

There will be no refund of NCLEX registration fees (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 submit an additional registration, please contact Pearson at the appropriate number listed under **Contact Information**. Additionally, there will be no refund of the international scheduling fee or VAT for any reason.

Failure to Pay

A candidate may not take the NCLEX if the registration fee has been stopped either by the candidate or a financial institution. If payment is stopped after the candidate takes the examination, NCSBN and the nursing regulatory bodies (NRBs) reserve the right to hold and/or cancel the candidate's result.

Registration Time Limit

All NCLEX registrations will remain open for a 365–day time period during which a nursing regulatory body (NRB) can determine a candidate’s eligibility. This time period begins when the NRB receives the candidate’s NCLEX registration from the test service. Once a candidate is made eligible, he or she must test within the validity dates printed on the Authorization to Test (ATT) email.

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

Registration Instructions

1. Submit an application for licensure/registration to the nursing regulatory body (NRB) where you wish to be licensed/registered. Be sure to meet the NRB’s application deadline.
2. Register for the NCLEX using one of the following methods.

Internet Registration

Visit the NCLEX Candidate website (<https://www.nclex.com/register.page>) to register.

- An email address is required when registering online.
- You can pay using a valid Visa, MasterCard, or American Express credit, debit, or prepaid card.
- Have your credit card ready when you begin your registration.

Telephone Registration

Call Pearson NCLEX Candidate Services at one of the numbers listed under **Contact Information**.

- An email address is required when registering over the phone.
- You can pay using a valid Visa, MasterCard, or American Express credit, debit, or prepaid 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.

Third-Party Payments

Nursing schools, agencies, or employers may register and administratively pay for the NCLEX on behalf of the candidate.

Visit <https://www.nclex.com/register.page> and complete a registration for the candidate or call Pearson NCLEX Candidate Services at one of the numbers listed under **Contact Information**.

Third-party payments may be paid for using a valid Visa, MasterCard, or American Express credit, debit, or prepaid card.

Test Accommodations

Testing accommodations for otherwise qualified candidates can be provided only with the authorization of your nursing regulatory body (NRB).

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

Do not schedule an appointment to take the NCLEX until you have received written confirmation of your accommodations and your Authorization to Test (ATT) email listing the granted accommodations.

Online Scheduling Option: If you have been approved for any of the following accommodations (and no additional ones), you may schedule your appointment online at <https://www.nclex.com/scheduling.page>.

- Extra time – 30 minutes
- Extra time – 1 hour
- Extra time – 2 hours
- Extra time – 3 hours

Candidates approved for all other testing accommodations **must** schedule their testing appointment by calling Pearson NCLEX Candidate Services at the telephone number listed on their ATT and asking for the NCLEX Accommodations Coordinator. Candidates with accommodations cannot cancel their accommodations at the time of their appointment.

Exam Scheduling

Authorization to Test (ATT)

After your nursing regulatory body (NRB) declares you eligible, you will receive your ATT email.

You must have your ATT to schedule an appointment to take the NCLEX. If the name on your ID does not match exactly the first and last names you provided when registering (as listed on your ATT), you will not be admitted to the examination and will be required to reregister and pay another exam fee to take the examination.

- The ATT email contains your authorization number, candidate identification number, and an expiration date.
- The ATT is valid for a period of time specified by the NRB (the average length of an ATT is 90 days).
- Once the NRB declares you eligible to test and your ATT is issued by email, you must test within the validity dates of your ATT.
- **The ATT validity dates cannot be extended for any reason. If you do not test within these dates you will have to reregister and pay another examination fee.**

Your Exam Appointment

Test centers may fill up quickly because of high volumes and previously scheduled special events. Waiting 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 Authorization to Test (ATT) is close to expiring, the test center may not be able to seat you prior to its expiration. If this occurs, you will be required to reregister and pay another examination fee.

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 after 45 days.

If you fail to arrive for your examination appointment or fail to reschedule/cancel without giving the appropriate notice (as outlined in **Changing Your Appointment**), you will forfeit your examination fee (and scheduling fee if applicable), and your ATT will be invalidated. **You will be required to reregister and pay another examination fee. Your failure to take the examination will be reflected in your registration as a case report that will be viewable by your NRB.**

Pearson will not be held responsible for expenses incurred beyond the cost of the exam, including but not limited to travel expenses and lost wages on the day of the exam.

Domestic Scheduling

Domestic examination appointments can be scheduled through the NCLEX Candidate website at <https://www.nclex.com/scheduling.page> or by calling Pearson NCLEX Candidate Services at one of the telephone numbers listed under **Contact Information**.

- If you are using the NCLEX Candidate website to schedule, you will be asked to supply your user ID and password, which are provided when you create an account with Pearson. You also will be asked your preference for date and time of testing at the test center of your choice.

- If you schedule via the telephone, you will be asked to supply your name and your Authorization to Test (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 test center 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 email will be sent to you from Pearson that will contain the date, time, and location of your appointment along with directions to the test center. Verify that all the information is correct, including that your first and last names match exactly the first and last names on the identification you plan to present on exam day. Call or go online to check that your appointment has been scheduled or rescheduled if you do not receive a confirmation. Contact Pearson NCLEX Candidate Services immediately at one of the numbers listed under **Contact Information** to correct any errors to your appointment.

International Scheduling

If you choose to schedule your examination at an international test center, you will be charged an additional, nonrefundable scheduling fee. If applicable, a value-added tax (VAT) may also be charged for this examination.

Please be aware that once you have an appointment at an international test center, if you decide to reschedule to a domestic test center or cancel the appointment, you will not receive a refund for the scheduling fee.

Please also be aware that the list of available international test centers 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 domestic test center, your international scheduling fee will be refunded.

Definitions of Domestic and International Test Centers

Test Center Type	Candidates seeking U.S. licensure	Candidates seeking Canadian licensure/ registration	Candidates seeking Australian licensure
Domestic	United States and territories, including American Samoa, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, and the U.S. Virgin Islands	Canadian provinces/ territories and the mainland United States	United States and territories, including American Samoa, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, and the U.S. Virgin Islands
International	Test centers outside of the United States and territories listed above	Test centers outside of Canadian provinces/ territories and the mainland United States	Test centers outside of the United States and territories listed above

Changing Your Appointment

If you need to change your appointment date, time, or location, log in to your NCLEX Candidate profile (www.nclex.com/register.page) or call Pearson 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, or Friday**, call or go online at least 24 hours prior to the day and time of your appointment, local standard time.
- For examinations scheduled on **Saturday, Sunday, or Monday**, call or go online no later than Friday at least 24 hours in advance of your appointment time, local standard time.

National holidays should also be considered when rescheduling an appointment, as offices may be closed.

Candidates who have appointments at an international test center may reschedule to another international test center without forfeiting their international scheduling fee. If you choose to reschedule your examination to a domestic test center, you will forfeit your international scheduling fee.

If you have an appointment at one of the domestic test centers and choose to reschedule to an international test center, you will be charged a nonrefundable international 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.

Leaving a message on an answering machine does not constitute giving the required notice for rescheduling or cancelling your exam appointment. You must either reschedule or cancel your appointment on the NCLEX Candidate website (<https://www.nclex.com/scheduling.page>) or by speaking with an agent at Pearson NCLEX Candidate Services and receive a confirmation of canceled/rescheduled appointment email.

Identification Requirements

Because of the importance of the NCLEX, several security measures will be enforced during the administration of the examination. Strict candidate identification requirements have been established.

When you arrive at the test center, you will be required to present one form of acceptable identification. Your identification must match exactly the first and last names you provided when registering. If your acceptable ID does not match exactly the first and last names you registered with, you will be turned away and required to reregister and pay another examination fee. If you paid the additional international scheduling fee, that will be forfeited as well.

Acceptable Forms of Identification

All forms of identification must be valid and meet the following requirements. If the ID does not meet these requirements, you will be turned away and required to reregister and pay another examination fee.

- Government-issued
- Non-expired
- Physical (Non-digital)
- Name (in Roman characters)
- Recent photograph
- Signature

Examples of acceptable forms of identification for domestic test centers are:

- Passport book or card
- Driver's license
- Provincial/territorial or state identification card
- Permanent residence card
- Military identification card

The **only** identification acceptable for international test centers, including Puerto Rico, is:

- Passport book or card

If your ID does not contain a signature but meets all other ID requirements listed above, you must bring in a secondary form of identification to the test center. The signature on your secondary ID must match exactly with the first and last names on your primary ID and with the names that you provided when you registered. The secondary identification must contain:

- Signature (in Roman characters)

Note: Any ID that is clipped, perforated, cracked, broken, or otherwise altered is invalid and will be treated as expired.

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. This is a federal requirement by the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) of the U.S. Department of Treasury.

In order to be admitted to the NCLEX, candidates who 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. Please visit the acceptable ID web page (<https://www.nclex.com/acceptable-id.page>) for the most up-to-date information on the U.S.–Sanctioned Countries Identification Policy.

Your Name

The first and last names printed on your identification must match exactly the first and last names you registered with. If the names with which you have registered are different from the names 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 Roman characters, in the English language, and must be the **original** documents. Candidates wishing to make a name change, address change, or email address change must contact their nursing regulatory body. This cannot be done at the test center. If the name on your identification does not match the name you registered with, you will be turned away and will have to reregister and pay another examination fee.

Test Center Rules and Regulations

NCLEX® Examination Candidate Rules

To ensure that all candidates' NCLEX 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. You will provide a digital signature agreeing to the full list of candidate rules presented to you at the time of testing (see **NCSBN Examination Candidate Rules** for the current version at time of publication), in addition to agreeing to NCSBN's biometric policy as outlined here: https://policies.ncsbn.org/biometric_data_policy.page.

Grounds for Dismissal or Cancellation of Results

A candidate who violates the test center regulations or rules, or engages in irregular behavior/misconduct and does not follow the test administrator's (TA's) warning to discontinue inappropriate behavior, may be dismissed from the test center, and his or her exam fee will not be refunded. Additionally, your exam result may be withheld or canceled, and your nursing regulatory body may take other disciplinary action such as denial of a license/registration and/or disqualifying you from future registrations for licensure/registration. Behaviors that constitute irregular behavior or misconduct include but are not limited to:

- Giving or receiving assistance of any kind
- Using, accessing, or attempting to access any prohibited aids

Prohibited aids are any devices or materials that will be helpful in taking the NCLEX. Examples of aids that are prohibited are electronic devices (e.g., cell/mobile/smart phones, tablets, smart watches, smart glasses, smart rings, etc.), handheld calculators, conversion tables, and dictionaries.

- Attempting to take the examination for someone else
- Bringing any NCLEX 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 break times
- Failing to follow testing regulations or the instructions of the TA
- Creating a disturbance of any kind
- Tampering with the operation of the computer or attempting to use it for any function other than taking the examination

Confidentiality

Candidates should never share login credentials or account access. Disclosure of credentials may result in exposure of personally identifiable information (PII), compromise of sensitive data, and increased vulnerability to cybersecurity risks.

NCSBN and Pearson will never ask for your password. If you suspect your account has been compromised, change your account's password immediately.

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 process, please report it to the NCLEX Test Security group. Candidates may report any suspicious behavior by calling NCSBN at 1.866.293.9600 (toll-free) or emailing examssecurity@ncsbn.org.

Test Security

NCSBN strives to report results that accurately reflect the ability of each candidate. Accordingly, our standards and procedures for administering exams have two related goals: giving candidates comparable opportunities to demonstrate their abilities and preventing any candidate 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 candidate's identification; a candidate engages in misconduct or irregular behavior that 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.

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 is not limited to, unusual answer patterns or unusual score increases from one exam to another. If a candidate's result is canceled or invalidated without finding that the candidate engaged in irregular behavior, the candidate may appeal the decision and may 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.

NCSBN Examination Candidate Rules

Si vous voulez lire les règles en français, veuillez en faire la demande à l'administrateur de l'examen.

NCSBN Examination Candidate Rules - You must thoroughly read this document prior to being seated for the examination.

Violations of the NCSBN Examination Candidate Rules or not following the instructions of the Test Administrator (TA), may result in your examination result being withheld and/or cancelled, and your examination fee will not be refunded. NCSBN and your nursing regulatory body may take other action, up to and including license revocation and referral to law enforcement for criminal prosecution.

Candidate Statement: *By providing a digital signature, I give Pearson my explicit consent to retain and transmit my personal data and test responses to Pearson, my nursing regulatory body, and to NCSBN (any of which may be outside of the country in which I am testing). I also agree to the terms and conditions of the NCSBN Biometric Data Policy. I consent to completing the security scanning protocol before entering the testing room. I understand and accept that if any unauthorized electronic items are discovered during the scan, I will be denied entry and will forfeit any exam fees paid. I understand the information provided and agree to follow the NCSBN Examination Candidate Rules. I agree to cooperate with the Test Administrator's investigation of any suspected irregular behavior, including the surrender of any suspected test preparation or study materials. Any incident of suspected irregular behavior, including, but not limited to, falsifying my identification, tampering with the computer, or engaging in disruptive behavior (including disclosure of examination content), will be reported to Pearson, NCSBN, and my nursing regulatory body. In the event NCSBN and/or Pearson determines that I have engaged in irregular behavior, my examination may be invalidated, the nursing regulatory body may take other action, and I will not be refunded my examination fee. I understand that my results may be canceled or withheld if, in NCSBN's or my nursing regulatory body's judgment, there is a basis to question the validity of the results for any reason, notwithstanding the absence of any evidence of my personal involvement in irregular activities. Evidence of invalid results may include, but is not limited to, unusual answer patterns or unusual score increases from one exam to another.*

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

DO NOT ACCESS ELECTRONIC DEVICES

All electronic devices (cell/mobile/smart phones, smart watches, smart glasses, smart rings, MP3 players, fitness bands, jump drives, cameras, etc.) must be powered off and stored inside a plastic bag provided by Pearson.

- Pearson has a Zero Tolerance Policy for all unauthorized electronic devices. They are strictly prohibited inside the testing area. Candidates who refuse to store their cell/mobile/smart phones or other electronic devices in the Pearson provided plastic bag upon check-in will not be allowed to test. They will be required to reregister and pay another exam fee for any additional exam appointments.
- **Return the bag unopened:** After the exam, you must return your unopened bag to the administration desk to be opened and examined by the TA. Any tampering of the bag before checkout will result in a case.

PERSONAL ITEMS POLICY

All personal items must be stored in your locker (including jewelry that is removable and larger than 1/4 inch [1/2 centimeter] wide). Pearson Professional Centers are not responsible for lost, stolen, or misplaced items. For any questions regarding what you can and cannot access outside the testing room, ask the TA.

- Do not access the following during your exam:
 - Study notes (any educational and/or test preparation materials)
 - Cell/mobile/smart phones, smart watches, smart glasses, smart rings, MP3 players, fitness bands, jump drives, cameras, or any other electronic device
 - Weapons of any kind

The following items are not allowed in the testing room but **may be accessed while on break:**

- Bags/purses/wallets/watches (smart watches cannot be accessed and must be placed in the plastic bag)
- Coats/hats
- Medical aids/devices
- Food or drink, gum/candy
- Lip balm
- Scarves/gloves

NCSBN Examination Candidate Rules

EXAMINATION CONFIDENTIALITY

Disclosure of examination items before, during, or after the examination is prohibited and may result in referral to law enforcement for criminal prosecution.

- You may not remove examination items and/or responses (in any format) or notes about the examination from the testing room.
- You may not disclose or discuss with anyone, including instructors, information about the items or answers seen in your examination (this includes posting or discussing questions on the internet and social media websites).
- You may not reconstruct exam items using your memory of your exam or the memory of others.
- You may not seek help from any other party in answering items (in person, by phone, by text, or by email) during your examination (including breaks).
- You may not copy or reconstruct exam items during or following your exam for any reason. Do not copy exam items word-for-word onto the noteboards provided.
- You must comply with any investigation that needs to be conducted.
- Note: If you witness any of the above behavior, or any irregular behavior that is in violation of this rules agreement, you are required to report it to NCSBN and comply with any follow up investigation.

EXAMINATION SECURITY PROTOCOL

- As part of enhanced exam security measures, all candidates will be subject to a security check prior to entering the testing room.
- The procedure is conducted by a trained TA who will guide candidates through each step, ensuring both candidate comfort and compliance with security protocols. Once the screening is complete, the TA will escort candidates to their seat for their examination.
- These measures are in place not only to protect the integrity of the testing process but also to provide a fair and secure environment for all candidates.

TESTING ROOM POLICY

- The TA will provide you with an erasable noteboard and marker before you enter the testing room.
- You may not use the noteboard to cover any part of the screen during your examination.
- A clean noteboard can be requested during your examination by **raising your hand**. The erasable noteboard 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.
- Writing on any materials other than the noteboard is strictly prohibited and will result in a case and results will be placed on hold (do not make notes to yourself on your hands or anywhere on your body about items you see on the exam).
- If you experience hardware or software problems during the examination, notify the TA immediately by **raising your hand**.
- Earplugs are available from the TA upon request; it is not acceptable to bring your own earplugs.
- You may not take the examination for somebody else.

BREAK PROCEDURES

You will be given the opportunity to take a scheduled break after approximately two hours, and again after approximately three and a half hours of testing time. Instructions will appear on your computer screen at the appropriate times. All breaks count against testing time. The exam clock will not stop while you are on a scheduled or unscheduled break.

- To request a break at any other time, or to exit the testing room for any other reason, you must **raise your hand** and wait to be escorted out of the testing room. A palm vein scan will be taken when you leave, and again when you re-enter the testing room. The TA will resume the exam for you upon your return.
- Lanyard policy: The TA will attach a lanyard to your locker key. The lanyard must remain visible during the break.

REPORTING EXAMINATION CONCERNS

If you have any problems or complaints regarding the examination or its administration, please call Exam Candidate Services toll free at 1-866-496-2539, or email info@ncsbn.org, within 14 days of your examination.

Exam data is encrypted and transferred electronically to your nursing regulatory body. Please refrain from asking the TA about exam content and/or results. If you have questions about the examination, please contact NCSBN at info@ncsbn.org.

Exam Day

The staff members at each test center 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 test center for your NCLEX appointment.

Check-in Process

Plan to arrive at the test center 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 appointment. Your failure to take the examination will be reflected in your registration as a case report, which will be viewable by your nursing regulatory body (NRB).

- You will be required to present a valid acceptable ID.
- You will be asked to provide your digital signature and a palm vein scan, and you will have your photograph taken.
- You will be required to complete the security scanning protocol before being admitted into the testing room. If the candidate refuses to be scanned and does not have a pre-approved exception from the NRB, the candidate will be turned away and forfeit their exam fee.
- Hats, scarves, and coats may not be worn in the testing room or while your photograph is being taken. You will be asked to remove any watches, large jewelry, or other accessories before entering the testing room.
- You will be required to place all electronic devices in a Pearson-provided sealable bag to be placed in the lockable storage provided to you for the duration of the examination appointment.
- Friends, relatives, or children who accompany you to the test center are not allowed 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, including breaks. Storage space is small, so candidates should plan appropriately. Test centers assume no responsibility for candidates' personal belongings.
- The test administrator (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.
- Refer to the **Test Center Rules and Regulations** for more 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 noteboards
- Need to take a break
- Need the TA for any reason
- Have completed your exam

Breaks

You will have up to five hours to complete the NCLEX-RN or NCLEX-PN examination; total examination time includes a short introductory screen, 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.
- If you decide to take a break, you must leave the testing room during both scheduled and unscheduled breaks.
- It is strongly advised that you not leave the test center during breaks. If you leave the test center building, all security procedures are repeated upon every re-entry into the testing room.
- When you take a break, all personal items accessed (including purses, wallets, etc.) may be inspected by the test administrator.
- Any tampering of the electronic device bag provided at check-in will be reported. This could result in the cancellation of your examination results.
- You will be required to provide a palm vein scan before and after your break.

Candidates are not allowed to access any of the prohibited personal items during breaks (including but not limited to those listed in the NCSBN Examination Candidate Rules). All breaks count against testing time.

Technical Issues

Occasionally, 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 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 exam 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.

Testing Environment

Test centers administer many types of examinations including some that require essay-type responses. Test centers 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 from the test administrator upon request. You may not bring your own earplugs.

Exam Conclusion

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 test administrator (TA). The TA will collect and inventory your notebook.

If you have electronic devices in a Pearson-provided bag, you must take the bag to the TA to be opened and inspected. Removal of devices by the candidate will result in a case report and could lead to the cancellation of your examination result.

The TA will dismiss you when all requirements are fulfilled.

If you believe there was an irregularity in the administration of your exam 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.

Results Reporting

For quality control purposes, every NCLEX 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. 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 nursing regulatory bodies (NRBs) and will be sent to candidates within six weeks after taking the examination (this time period varies across NRBs). **Do not call** Pearson NCLEX Candidate Services, the test center, or NCSBN for examination results. If more than six weeks have passed and you have not received your results, contact your NRB. Once your NRB has released your results, they will be available to all NRBs.

You can also get your “unofficial” results after two business days through the quick results service available through your candidate profile (<https://www.nclex.com/register.htm>). **Quick results are not available in all states, and there is a minimal fee for this service.** For a list of NRBs that participate in quick results, please visit <https://www.nclex.com/quick-results.page>. **The Quick Results service is not available for candidates seeking licensure/registration in Canada or Australia.**

Candidate Performance Report

When a candidate fails, the nursing regulatory body sends the candidate a Candidate Performance Report (CPR). This report identifies the performance as failing, specifies the number of items administered to the candidate, and provides 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.

Retake Policy

The NCSBN retake policy allows candidates to take the NCLEX eight times a year, and there must be at least 45 test-free days between each examination. This is unless the desired jurisdiction of licensure/registration only offers a limited number of NCLEX exams per year. Candidates are encouraged to contact the nursing regulatory body for their policy on NCLEX retakes.

Comments and Further Questions

You may ask the test administrator for a Confidential Comment Sheet to provide any information about your exam appointment to NCSBN, the test centers, or Pearson NCLEX Candidate Services.

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

NCLEX® Content, Test Development, and Test Plans

Exam 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.^{1,2} 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.

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

² 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.

Exam Development

The NCLEX is developed using the following steps:

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. During alternate years, NCSBN conducts the Continuous Practice Analysis to validate the existing NCLEX Test Plan. If significant changes in entry-level practice are noted, the findings are forwarded to the NCSBN Board of Directors for further direction. Test plans, which outline the content categories and percentage of exam 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 nursing instructors 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

Term	Definition
Client	Individual, family, or group which includes significant others and population
Clinical judgment	The observed outcome of critical thinking and decision-making It is an iterative process with multiple steps that uses nursing knowledge to observe and assess presenting situations, identify a prioritized client concern, and generate the best possible evidence-based solutions in order to deliver safe client care. The clinical judgment steps include recognize cues, analyze cues, prioritize hypotheses, generate solutions, take action, and evaluate outcomes.
NCLEX integrated processes	Themes such as the nursing process, caring, communication, documentation, teaching, learning, clinical judgment, culture, and spirituality that are fundamental to the practice of nursing and are integrated throughout the Client Needs categories and subcategories
Order	Intervention, remedy, or treatment as directed by an authorized primary health care provider
Prescription	Intervention as it relates to medication specifically as directed by an authorized primary 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.
Primary health care provider	Members of the health care team who are licensed and authorized to formulate prescriptions and orders on behalf of the client, as well as receive notifications of client status, are referred as primary health care provider, medical physician (or other specialty, e.g., surgeon, nephrologist) or an advanced practice nurse.
Unlicensed assistive personnel (UAP)	Any unlicensed personnel trained to function in a supportive role, regardless of title, to whom a nursing responsibility may be delegated

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 from the NCLEX website at: www.nclex.com/test-plans.page.

Client Needs Categories Covered on the NCLEX®

The content of the 2026 NCLEX-RN® Test Plan and the 2026 NCLEX-PN® Test Plan is organized into four major Client Needs categories. Two of the four categories are divided into subcategories. The 2026 NCLEX-RN Test plan is effective April 1, 2026 through March 31, 2029, and the 2026 NCLEX-PN is effective April 1, 2026 through March 31, 2029.

The following processes are integrated into all Client Needs categories of the RN and PN Test Plan: nursing process, caring, clinical judgment, communication and documentation, teaching/learning, and culture and spirituality. In addition to the Client Needs categories and subcategories listed below, clinical judgment processes are explicitly measured by 18 case study items (i.e., three item sets) and approximately 10% stand-alone items, which will be selected depending on exam length.

2026 NCLEX–RN Test Plans

NCLEX–RN Client Needs	Percentage of items from each category/subcategory
Safe and Effective Care Environment	
• Management of care	15–21%
• Safety and infection prevention and control	10–16%
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	9–15%
• Physiological adaptation	11–17%

2026 NCLEX–PN Test Plans

NCLEX–PN Client Needs	Percentage of items from each category/subcategory
Safe and Effective Care Environment	
• Coordinated care	18–24%
• Safety and infection prevention and control	10–16%
Health Promotion and Maintenance	6–12%
Psychosocial Integrity	9–15%
Physiological Integrity	
• Basic care and comfort	7–13%
• Pharmacological therapies	10–16%
• Reduction of risk potential	9–15%
• Physiological adaptation	7–13%

NCLEX Psychometrics

Computerized Adaptive Testing (CAT)

The NCLEX is different from 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. Instead, the NCLEX uses CAT to produce exam results that are more stable and more efficient by targeting items to the candidate's ability. The goal of CAT 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 by considering all the responses given so far. 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 targeted to the content area that will produce the best match to the test plan percentages so that each candidate's exam has enough questions from each content area to meet the test plan requirements. Regarding clinical judgment items, three case study sets and approximately 10% stand-alone items will be selected depending on the exam length.
2. An item or item set is selected to provide the most information regarding the candidate's ability. 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 or item set that the candidate should have around a 50% chance of answering correctly. This way, the next item or item set should not be too easy or too hard, and the examination can get maximum information about the candidate's ability from the item or item set.
3. CAT excludes any item or item set that a repeat candidate has seen in the previous examinations.

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 unknown, these items are excluded when the computer is 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 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 after reaching the minimum number of items.

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 interval rule and considers only the final ability estimate, which is computed-based on all scored items responded to and submitted:

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

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

If the candidate runs out of time before reaching the maximum number of items, the computer has not been able to decide whether the candidate passed or failed with 95% certainty. Therefore, an alternate rule must be used:

- If the candidate has not answered the minimum number of items, the result will be a failing exam.
- If the candidate has answered the minimum number of items, then the exam is scored by using the final ability estimate computed from the responses to all completed items.
 - If the final ability estimate is at or above the passing standard, the candidate passes.
 - If the final ability estimate is below the passing standard, the candidate fails.

Item Formats

Each NCLEX candidate is provided information on how to answer examination items. A tutorial is available to all candidates prior to examination day. The tutorial explains the various item formats that candidates may see on the examination. More detailed information about the NCLEX examination, including information on CAT methodology, the candidate bulletin, and tutorials, can be found at the www.nclex.com. A more detailed description of the item types can be found in the Prepare section on the website (<https://www.nclex.com/prepare.page>).

A short tutorial explaining how to answer each of the different NCLEX item types can be found at <https://www.nclex.com/prepare.page>.

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 respective passing standards. The NCSBN Board of Directors reevaluates these standards once every three years for each exam. 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 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; (4) information describing the educational readiness of high school graduates who express an interest in nursing; and (5) a list of the members on the Standard Setting Panel of Judges and their qualifications.

Once the passing standard is set, it is imposed uniformly on every exam record according to the procedures explained in the **NCLEX Pass or Fail Decision Rules**. To pass the NCLEX, a candidate must perform at or 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 appear to have 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 lowers the candidate ability estimate further. The best advice is to maintain a reasonable pace and carefully read and consider each item before answering.



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