

Summary of Modifications to the NCLEX-RN® and NCLEX-PN® Examinations

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, NCSBN® introduced several carefully evaluated and evidenced-based modifications to the NCLEX-RN® and NCLEX-PN® examinations, beginning on March 25, 2020.

In addition to the removal of unscored pretest items from the exams, NCSBN made the following modifications to both the RN and PN examinations:

- The minimum number of test items is 60
- The maximum number of test items is 130
- The maximum testing time is 4 hours
- The difficulty level and passing standard has not changed
- The Next Generation NCLEX Special Research Section is NOT included

Collectively, these modifications were designed to maintain psychometric rigor and validity while reducing test time. The modified exams continue to use the same exam items, [passing standard](#) and [computer adaptive testing \(CAT\)](#) algorithms as before. Exam delivery will continue to adaptively select items consistent within the [NCLEX Test Plans](#) and remains focused on the ability level of the candidate. Item selection will always be chosen at the level appropriate for each candidate. As such, the difficulty of the exams is unchanged.

The exam modifications allow us to maximize capacity at the testing centers where testing appointments are being reduced due to social distancing requirements.

Ensuring Exam Structure

To ensure maintenance, reliability, and legal defensibility of the pass/fail results, NCSBN ran numerous simulations and comparisons against historical NCLEX candidate data. The simulations and comparisons confirmed the measurement properties of the modified exams and did not identify any negative impact on the candidates testing experience or results.

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