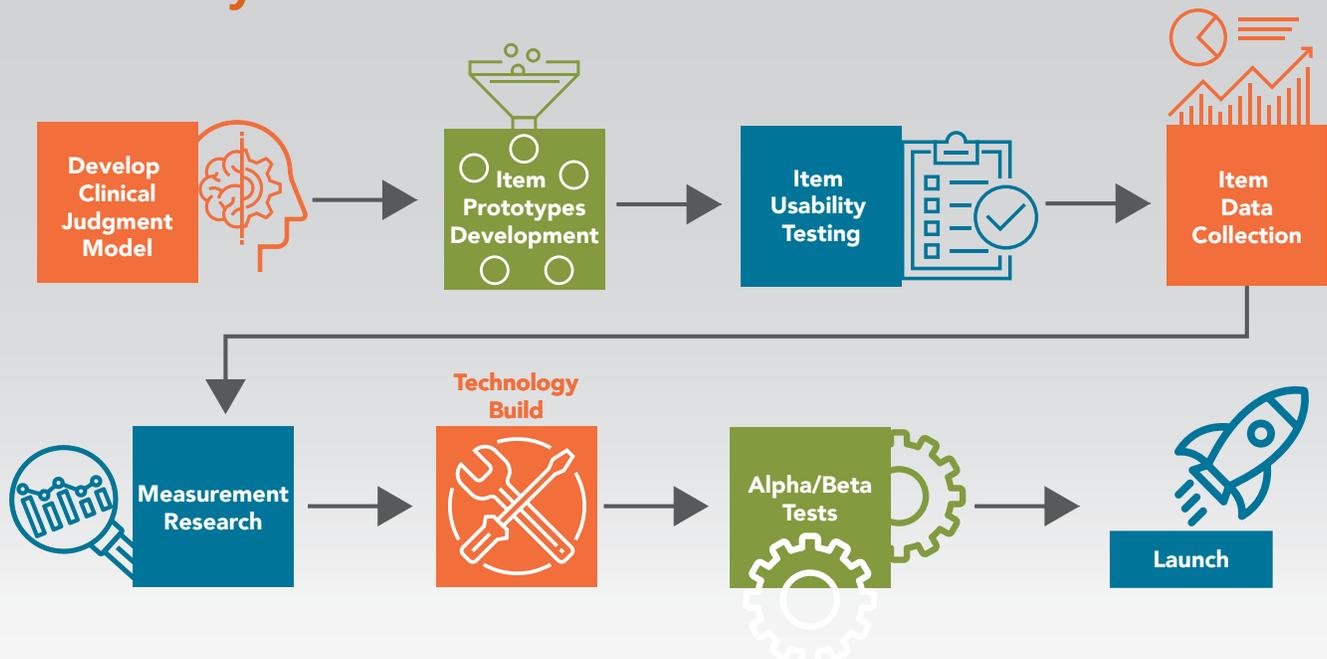


# Next Generation NCLEX® NEWS

## NCLEX-RN® Examinations Analysis and Research



The Next Generation NCLEX® News is a quarterly publication that provides the latest information about the research being done to assess potential changes to the NCLEX Examinations. In this issue, you will find information related to the Strategic Practice Analysis and Item Type Data Collection (ITDC) findings from the Special Research Section that is part of the NCLEX-RN® Examinations.

### Summary of the Strategic Practice Analysis

An important component of NCSBN's role in supporting the work of nurse regulatory bodies in ensuring public protection is the development of a valid and reliable measure of entry-level nurse competence. A key element of this activity is ensuring the NCLEX is comprehensive and reflects current nursing practice.

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To aid in the identification of a comprehensive list of current aspects of nursing practice, NCSBN conducted a strategic practice analysis of entry-level registered nurses (RNs). The study focused on collecting both qualitative and quantitative data from a diverse set of RN job experts about the requirements of the job, leveraging multiple data collection methods and focusing on essential aspects of the RN practice.

The purpose of the study was to support the development and validation of the knowledge, skills and abilities required of entry-level RNs. To help ensure a comprehensive analysis of the full scope of entry-level RN practice, the study focused on the following job-related information:



### Measurement Research

- **Duties;**
- **Tasks;**
- **Knowledge;**
- **Skills;**
- **Abilities;**
- **Other personal characteristics;**
- **Tools and equipment;**
- **Health care trends;**
- **Key judgments; and**
- **Consequences of error.**

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**The following definitions/descriptions were used throughout each component of the study to help ensure reliability of the study participants' responses:**

**Clinical Judgment** is defined by the skill of recognizing cues about a clinical situation, generating and weighing hypotheses, taking action and evaluating outcomes for the purpose of arriving at a satisfactory clinical outcome. Clinical judgment is the observed outcome of two unobserved underlying mental processes, critical thinking and decision making.

**Problem Solving** includes developing and evaluating interventions to resolve complex problems within the context of nursing.

**Critical Thinking** involves the skill of using logic and reasoning to identify the strengths and weaknesses of alternative health care solutions, conclusions or approaches to clinical or practice problems.

The findings from the Strategic Practice Analysis confirmed the importance of sound clinical judgment skills to a significant number of tasks performed by entry-level nurses. The research found that clinical judgment, problem solving and critical thinking were reported among the top five skills required of entry-level RNs.

**Clinical judgment was linked directly to more than 46 percent of tasks performed by entry-level nurses, while problem solving and critical thinking were linked to more than 30 percent of tasks performed by entry-level nurses.**

These initial findings provided evidence of the importance of clinical judgment, problem solving and critical thinking to competent practice of entry-level nurses and the necessity to measure these skills within the NCLEX. Based on these findings, the focus of the Next Generation NCLEX research is developing innovative item types that can validly and reliably measure clinical judgment and decision making in nursing practice. The Strategic Practice Analysis Executive Summary (PDF) can be downloaded [here](#).

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## Item Type Data Collection (ITDC) Preliminary Analysis from Special Research Section

Beginning in July 2017, NCSBN presented a Special Research Section with the NCLEX-RN administration. The Special Research Section is offered to select candidates taking the NCLEX-RN, participation is voluntary and does not count towards the candidate's score. The Special Research Section is intended to collect data on new item types (ITDC) that could expand or enhance the measurement of entry-level nursing competence, including clinical judgment. The initial ITDC results from the July 2017 exam provided the following findings:

- **79.1 percent of NCLEX candidates who received the Special Research Section participated;**
- **Candidates completed an average of 17 out of 20 items; and**
- **Candidates spent an average of 19.6 minutes to complete the entire Special Research Section.**

The following analyses focused on several key variables including ethnicity, gender, educational program type and NCLEX exam repeater status. The demographics remained consistent among participating and nonparticipating candidates.



The Special Research Section will continue for the next several quarters and will provide valuable data to aid in developing innovative item types and scoring rules, and gathering evidence of item characteristics that support and drive further research for the NGN project. Additional information about the Special Research Section can be found on the [NGN resource page](#).





## NGN Project Web Pages Now Available!

This section of the NCSBN website includes overview and updates about the **Next Generation NCLEX Project**, **NGN Resources** and **NGN FAQs**.

Looking for updates about the NGN Project?  
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111 E. Wacker Drive, Suite 2900  
Chicago, IL 60601-4277

Phone: 312.525.3600  
International Calls:  
+1.312.525.3600

Website: [www.ncsbn.org](http://www.ncsbn.org)



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