



NCSBN
Leading Regulatory Excellence

Past Event: 2021 NCSBN REx-PN Conference - Test Security and Accommodations Transcript

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Event

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More info: <https://www.ncsbn.org/16034.htm>

Presenter

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Hello, and thank you so much for spending your day with us. I am very happy to be here and to present two REx-PN testing processes, testing security and testing accommodations. My name is Jacklyn Currier, and I'm the operations manager in the Exams Department at NCSBN.

Myself, along with the operations team will monitor the administration of the REx-PN to ensure the fair and secure delivery of the exam. By the end of this session, you will be able to, one, discuss REx-PN security measures. Two, define the REx-PN accommodations process. And three, identify some common accommodation requests. For the first REx-PN process, I will go over testing security and the measures that will be put in place for the exam.

We'll start with the ways in which NCSBN verifies candidate identity. Then we'll also look at the testing environment itself. More specifically, how the delivery system works for secure test administration. Further, we'll explain the purpose of video monitoring, incident case documentation, and why results may go on hold.

And lastly, I'll introduce you to NCSBN's Test Security Group. Verifying candidates' identity. Candidates must present their acceptable ID when they arrive at the test center in order to be admitted to the testing room. Test administrators, or TAs, are checking the candidate's identification to answer many questions.

Is the candidate testing domestically or internationally, for instance? The difference between the two is that the candidate will need to present a passport for international testing sites. Additionally, the TAs will ask, does the ID meet all requirements? Meaning is it government-issued, non-expired, contains a name in Roman characters, a recent photograph, and a signature?

If not, does the candidate need a secondary ID? Should the candidate be turned away? How about the first and last names? Do they match exactly the first and last names the candidate registered with? If

these do not match, the candidate risks being turned away. Does the signature on the ID match the signature provided at the test site? And does the photo on the ID match the candidate presented?

Verifying the presented acceptable ID is just one of the ways in which we strive to protect the REx-PN from proxy test takers and ensure that the candidates taking the test are who they say they are. The other elements in verifying candidate identity are the biometrics that candidates provide on exam day, which include having their photo taken, scanning their palm vein, and providing their digital signature, as seen here on the slide.

The signature is used to match the identification in addition to agreeing to the REx-PN candidate rules. These rules are designed to ensure that the REx-PN is administered under standardized conditions, as well as preserving NCSBN's intellectual property interest in exam content. All candidates are provided a paper copy of the examination candidate rules, including the statement as seen here.

By providing their signature, candidates agree to abide by these terms. Included on the candidate rules are the list of prohibited items at test centers. Most notably and not surprisingly, electronic devices and study materials. Candidates are asked upon arrival if they have any electronic devices. This includes cell phones and digital watches, or any study materials with them in the test center.

If candidates do have electronic devices, they are given a Pearson VUE sealable plastic bag for those items to be placed in their locker for the duration of the exam appointment. If they have study materials, candidates are reminded and informed that they cannot access study materials at all during their examination, including breaks.

Candidates are given linears for both scheduled and unscheduled breaks as a designation that they are currently testing and may not access prohibited items. Now, let's get into the testing room and talk about its environment from a security perspective. Pearson VUE and NCSBN ensure a secure testing environment by using protected methods for data transmission and for storing data on the file server, which is guarded by encryption, fragmentation, and unique passwords.

Additionally, there's a prevention of printing any test items, candidate files, or software files at every site. In terms of software security, each authorized user has a unique username and password allowing that individual to access only features and applications they require. Video cameras and a microphone are in the testing room, as you can see here.

Every test site that delivers the REx-PN uses state-of-the-art technology to record testing sessions, both audio and visual, as well as to securely transmit sensitive data and candidate-specific information. The testing rooms themselves are of sufficient size and design to assure direct monitoring of each person testing.

A proctor observation station is set up outside the testing room. This is where the proctor directly observes candidates at all times in a sound-insulated partition station with a viewing window. A microphone at the testing area broadcasts all sounds to the proctor. Video cameras are located in the testing room and overhead each workstation, as well as the video monitoring station at the proctor desk.

Digital recordings are held in secure storage for at least 30 days for review in cases of unusual incidents. This very robust surveillance allows Pearson VUE and NCSBN to monitor what happens at each test site. If the security measures and procedures, such as the monitoring of candidates, leads TAs with reason to believe that unusual, irregular behavior or a system error has occurred, we want this

information not only to be recorded, but to also be documented, which will give NCSBN an opportunity to further investigate.

This information is immediately tracked and documented by the TAs in the Case Documentation system. Here, the TAs will know any issues, errors, irregular activity, or behavior that occurs at the site. This system is an internet-based real-time reporting and tracking system.

It's accessible by NCSBN, nursing regulatory bodies, and Pearson VUE. Any record that contains an irregularity causes a result to be placed on hold. This means that while in review, the result will not be made available to the candidate's nursing regulatory body. NCSBN will review the irregularity to ensure that the examination was able to accurately assess a candidate's true competence.

Most often, a result hold is reviewed and released within 24 business hours once NCSBN determines the score is valid, accurate, and secure. Some common reasons for results to go on hold is if, the system identifies an unusual response pattern or the TA observed irregular behavior or candidate misconduct, if there was an apparent discrepancy in or falsification of a candidate's ID, or simply the candidate failed to follow the exam administration rules.

All of these instances would merit a case creation, placing the result on hold until a review is concluded. Now, the security of the REx-PN is not exclusive to the exam day. Candidates should be aware and understand that the disclosure of any examination materials, including the nature or content of exam items before, during, or after the exam is a violation of law. Violations of confidentiality and/or candidate rules can result in criminal prosecution, civil liability, and/or disciplinary actions by the regulatory body, including the denial of licensure.

Disclosure of exam materials includes but is not limited to discussing exam items with faculty, friends, family, or others. In addition to ongoing security measures, NCSBN has a security group where anyone with knowledge of possible candidate misconduct may report the issues.

Individuals may also report suspected instances of leaked content on the internet or any other information that may compromise the exam. Please feel free to share the contact information with your students. Moving now on to the second process we'll be discussing in this session, REx-PN testing accommodations.

During this half of the session, we will go over the definition of a testing accommodation, the roles in which candidates, NCSBN, Pearson VUE, and nursing regulatory bodies play throughout this process. And lastly, we'll identify some common accommodation requests. NCSBN offers REx-PN testing accommodations in accordance with the ADA, the Canadian Charter of Rights, and/or provincial human rights legislation as it requires licensure programs to provide appropriate accommodations for candidates with disabilities.

What constitutes a disability? A physical or mental impairment that limits an individual inability to perform major life activities, such as hearing, seeing, walking, working, and learning. Testing accommodations are provided to candidates with disabilities so that they can showcase their true abilities in the areas that the REx-PN measures.

It is the REx-PN candidates seeking testing accommodations who initiates this process. They're going to first contact the regulatory body. This is to determine the requirements for accommodations and to learn

about how to submit the request. NCSBN strongly encourages candidates to request accommodations from their nursing regulatory body at the same time as applying for licensure.

This will give ample time for the regulatory body to review and process the request. Next step for the candidate will be to register for the REx-PN. The nursing regulatory body will then review the accommodations request and its supporting documentation. All documentation must be submitted by a qualified professional with expertise in the areas of the diagnosed disability.

Once the nursing regulatory body reviews all the documentation and determines it is appropriate, the accommodation request is approved and sent to NCSBN for review. Once received, NCSBN will verify the accommodation request is psychometrically sound and safeguards the fairness and security of the testing process for all candidates. We also verify that the request does not alter the validity of the exam in any way.

If the accommodation request threatens the psychometric soundness, fairness, and/or security of the REx-PN, NCSBN will work with the nursing regulatory body to offer alternatives for the candidate, or we may deny the request. For example, an accommodation request for paper and pencil tests would be denied because an adaptive test like the REx-PN cannot be completed on paper.

A paper and pencil exam is a fixed-length exam. Therefore, the measurement standard would not be comparable between the two. NCSBN ensures that test scores with accommodations is comparable to a score without an accommodation. There cannot be an unfair advantage either way. Though, as mentioned, if we do deny an accommodation request, we will offer alternatives.

In the paper and pencil example, we could offer large font and/or high contrast. Once NCSBN deems the request valid, the request is then granted. And this is where Pearson VUE comes in. When the candidate is marked eligible by their nursing regulatory body, the candidate will receive their authorization to test or ATT email from Pearson VUE.

This email is sent to the address that the candidate provided with their REx-PN registration. The ATT will state accommodations granted. Please do note that if any changes or cancellations need to be made for granted accommodations, the candidate must contact their nursing regulatory body prior to scheduling an examination appointment.

Candidates cannot change their accommodation or choose to test without the accommodation the day of their exam appointment. Most scheduling appointments with accommodations will need to be done over the phone. The ATT email will detail scheduling instructions for the candidate, including the direct telephone number and the title of the contact person, the REx-PN accommodations coordinator.

This coordinator is trained to schedule accommodation appointments and to work directly with the test center to ensure that the accommodation is set up properly before the candidate arrives for the exam. The accommodations coordinator will also work with the candidate as needed until the day of their exam appointment.

The slide here showcases the most frequently requested accommodations, extra time, one, two, or three hours, extra time, which is double the testing time over two consecutive days, a separate room and reader, and personal items. Some other accommodation requests we receive are using assistive personnel, such as a reader or recorder.

This individual is a Pearson VUE-provided personnel who reads the questions and answer choices to the candidate or records the answers on the computer. Sign language interpretation is also an available accommodation. Candidates with these accommodations require a separate room as to not distract the other candidates. We may also see requests for, adjustable font size, adjustable contrast on the monitor, and screen magnifier.

Please note that candidates testing at international test centers should contact their nursing regulatory body to determine the accommodations available at the testing site to ensure that their testing needs can be met. Lastly, it is worthwhile to share the Comfort Aids list with your students. These aids are items that may be brought into the testing center that do not require pre-approval or an accommodation.

Some examples include an auto-injector such as an EpiPen, a medical device such as an insulin pump, cough drops, glucose tablets, hearing aid, and inhaler. These items are inspected and then allowed into the testing room. Medical device comfort aids that do not require pre-approval, such as insulin pumps that are attached to the body are allowed in the testing room so long as they do not produce sound.

Sound could potentially distract other candidates. If the candidate has a device that does produce sound, they should request an accommodation with their nursing regulatory body who would approve a separate testing room accommodation. Let's recap on what we've spoken about today. Testing security is very important to protecting the validity and integrity of the REx-PN.

Candidate identification is appropriately reviewed and biometrics are documented at test sites for every appointment. Testing centers are inherently equipped with the state-of-the-art technology to protect exam content and rules are enforced to secure any confidentiality breaches. The public can also report any suspicious activity to the REx-PN testing group.

The REx-PN accommodations process begins with the candidate, then continues with their licensing jurisdiction who processes the request. NCSBN then reviews all requests to ensure the fairness and security of the REx-PN. And lastly, Pearson VUE ensures the smooth delivery of the exam with the approved accommodations.

Thank you so very much for your time today. For any specific questions, please be sure to enter them into the Q&A box for our next Q&A session, or email us at any time at info@ncsbn.org. Take care.