

GOING **BEYOND**

NCSBN ANNUAL MEETING

AUG. 13-15, 2025 | CHICAGO





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2026 NCLEX-RN® and 2026 NCLEX-PN® Test Plans

Summary of Proposed Changes

Crystal Tillman, DNP, RN, CPNP,
PMHNP-BC, FRE

NCLEX® Examination Committee
(NEC) Chair

Outline

- Fiscal Year 2025 (FY25) NCLEX Examination Committee (NEC) and NCLEX Item Review Subcommittee (NIRSC) members
- NCSBN mission and NEC charge
- FY25 accomplishments
- Practice analysis and NCLEX test plan
- Recommendations to the Delegate Assembly
- Proposed 2026 NCLEX-RN and 2026 NCLEX-PN test plans
- Implementation timeline
- Future activities



NCSBN Mission and NEC Charge

- NCSBN Mission
 - NCSBN empowers and supports nursing regulators in their mandate to protect the public.
- NEC Charge
 - Advise the Board of Directors (BOD) on matters related to the NCLEX examination process, including examination item development, security, administration, and quality assurance to ensure consistency with the nursing regulatory body's need for examinations.



FY25 NEC Members

Crystal Tillman, DNP, RN, CPNP,
PMHNP-BC, FRE

- North Carolina

Carel Mountain, DNP, MSN, ADN

- California (VN)

Tammy Buchholz, DNP, RN, CNE, FRE

- North Dakota

JaCinda Downs, EdD, CNE

- Minnesota

Barbara Blozen, EdD, MA, RN-BC, CNL

- New Jersey

Kristin Benton, DNP, RN

- Texas

Vicki Lavender, MSN, RN

- Alabama

Salvatore Diaz, DNP, CNE

- Connecticut

Christine Penney, PhD, MPA, RN

- British Columbia, Exam User
Member



FY25 NIRSC Members

Amy Ackerson, MSN-NE

- Missouri

Cynthia Arpin, EdD, MSN, RN

- Connecticut

Jackie Barber, EdD, MSN, RN,
CNS, CNL

- Iowa

Sarah Bear, EdD, MSN, MA, RN,
CNE

- Washington

Hansella Caines Robson, MSN,
MHA, RN

- Massachusetts

Kristina Deaver, MSN

- North Carolina

Diana Forst, ADN

- Florida

Georgina Howard, MPA, MSN, RN-
BC, NE-BC

- New York



FY25 NIRSC Members (cont.)

Grace A. Jacek, DNP, APRN,
FNP-BC

- Michigan

Ken Johnson, RN

- Texas

Rhonda Johnson, LPN

- Minnesota

Randall Mangrum, DNP, MSN

- Virginia

Judith McLeod, DNP, CPNP,
RN

- California (VN)

Ann Marie Milner, DNP, MSN

- North Carolina

Victoria Record, EdD,
AGPCNP-BC, RN, CNE

- New York



FY25 NIRSC Members (cont.)

Rhonda Scott, JD, CRNI

- Maryland

Beverly Skloss, MSN, RN

- Texas

Sarah Spangler, RN

- Montana

Maceo Tanner, RN

- Georgia

Stacey Rollins

Thompson, MSN, RN

- North Carolina

Sherri Trujillo, LPN

- Wyoming

Terry Ward, MSN, PhD,
RN, CNE

- North Carolina



FY25 NEC Accomplishments

- Reviewed BOD and non-BOD NCLEX policies
- Approved NCLEX items and item case reports
- Engaged in strategic discussions to gain new perspectives for the future direction of NCLEX
- Approved NCLEX items used in exam scoring



FY25 NEC Accomplishments (cont.)

- Published the 2024 RN Practice Analysis and 2024 RN Nursing Knowledge Survey reports
- Published the 2024 LPN/VN Practice Analysis and 2024 LPN/VN Nursing Knowledge Survey reports



FY25 NEC Accomplishments (cont.)

- Reviewed and approved the 2025 NCLEX-RN and NCLEX-PN standard setting panel of judges
- Approved the 2026 NCLEX-RN and NCLEX-PN test plans for proposed recommendation to the Delegate Assembly



Purpose of Practice Analysis Studies

- Periodically perform practice analyses to assist in evaluating the validity of the test plan and content distribution for NCLEX
- Provide a list of NEC-approved entry-level activity statements



Recommendations to the Delegate Assembly

- Adopt the proposed *2026 NCLEX-RN® Test Plan*
- Adopt the proposed *2026 NCLEX-PN® Test Plan*



Rationale for the 2026 NCLEX-RN and NCLEX-PN Test Plan Recommendations

- Recommendations are based on:
 - 2024 RN Practice Analysis
 - 2024 LPN/VN Practice Analysis
 - Panelist expert judgment
 - Feedback from member boards and regulatory bodies



NCLEX Test Plan Journey

- 2024 NCLEX-RN and NCLEX-PN practice analyses data analyzed
- NEC recommends a draft NCLEX test plan
 - Category structure
 - Client categories
 - Integrated processes
 - Category percentages
 - Content included (approved activity statements)
- Nursing regulatory body feedback
- Board of Directors
- Delegate Assembly



Proposed 2026 NCLEX-RN and NCLEX-PN Test Plans

- Overall format is retained
- Minor edits for currency and clarity
- Client Needs category percentages retained
- Client Needs category name revision
- New activity statements added



Changes to the Test Plans

Client Needs category:

2023 NCLEX-RN and NCLEX-PN Category 2: Safety and Infection Control

2026 NCLEX-RN and NCLEX-PN Category 2: Safety and Infection **Prevention and** Control



NCLEX-RN Test Plan Comparisons

2023 NCLEX-RN Test Plan		2026 NCLEX-RN Test Plan	
Client Needs Categories/Subcategories	Percentage of Items	Client Needs Categories/Subcategories	Percentage of Items
Safe and Effective Care Environment		Safe and Effective Care Environment	
• Management of Care	15-21%	• Management of Care	15-21%
• Safety and Infection Control	10-16%	• Safety and Infection Prevention and Control	10-16%
Health Promotion and Maintenance	6-12%	Health Promotion and Maintenance	6-12%
Psychosocial Integrity	6-12%	Psychosocial Integrity	6-12%
Physiological Integrity		Physiological Integrity	
• Basic Care and Comfort	6-12%	• Basic Care and Comfort	6-12%
• Pharmacological and Parenteral Therapies	13-19%	• Pharmacological and Parenteral Therapies	13-19%
• Reduction of Risk Potential	9-15%	• Reduction of Risk Potential	9-15%
• Physiological Adaptation	11-17%	• Physiological Adaptation	11-17%



NCLEX-PN Test Plan Comparisons

2023 NCLEX-PN Test Plan		2026 NCLEX-PN Test Plan	
Client Needs Categories/Subcategories	Percentage of Items	Client Needs Categories/Subcategories	Percentage of Items
Safe and Effective Care Environment		Safe and Effective Care Environment	
• Coordinated Care	18-24%	• Coordinated Care	18-24%
• Safety and Infection Control	10-16%	• Safety and Infection Prevention and Control	10-16%
Health Promotion and Maintenance	6-12%	Health Promotion and Maintenance	6-12%
Psychosocial Integrity	9-15%	Psychosocial Integrity	9-15%
Physiological Integrity		Physiological Integrity	
• Basic Care and Comfort	7-13%	• Basic Care and Comfort	7-13%
• Pharmacological Therapies	10-16%	• Pharmacological Therapies	10-16%
• Reduction of Risk Potential	9-15%	• Reduction of Risk Potential	9-15%
• Physiological Adaptation	7-13%	• Physiological Adaptation	7-13%



Timeline for the Implementation of the 2026 NCLEX-RN and NCLEX-PN Test Plans

Date	Action
July 2025	Panel of Judges meets to recommend the 2026 NCLEX-RN passing standard
August 2025	Proposed 2026 NCLEX-RN and NCLEX-PN test plans submitted to the Delegate Assembly and action is provided
September 2025	Panel of Judges meets to recommend the 2026 NCLEX-PN passing standard
December 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• NCSBN Board of Directors evaluates the 2026 NCLEX-RN and NCLEX-PN passing standards• The approved 2026 NCLEX-RN and NCLEX-PN test plans are published and placed on the NCLEX website
April 1, 2026	Approved 2026 NCLEX-RN and NCLEX-PN test plans and 2026 NCLEX-RN and NCLEX-PN passing standards are effective



Future Activities

- Continue to monitor all administrative, test development, and psychometric aspects of the NCLEX program
- Evaluate all aspects of the NCLEX program and initiate additional quality assurance processes as needed
- Evaluate NCLEX informational initiatives, such as the NCLEX conferences, NCLEX regional workshops, and other presentations



Future Activities (cont.)

- Host the 2025 NCLEX Conference on September 10, 2025
- Conduct 2026 NCLEX-PN standard setting
- Communicate to disseminate original and collaborative research outcomes at professional and academic conferences



Future Activities (cont.)

- Explore future uses of the NCSBN Clinical Judgment Measurement Model to better support efforts of nursing regulation
- Continue to develop and test remote proctoring using AI security technology



Thank you!



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