



**NCSBN**  
Leading Regulatory Excellence

## **REx-PN Using CAT Video Transcript**

©2020 National Council of State Boards of Nursing, Inc.

More info: <https://www.ncsbn.org/rex-pn>

### **Presenter**

British Columbia College of Nursing Professionals (BCCNP)  
College of Nurses of Ontario (CNO)

Compared to the dated pencil-and-paper tests we all experienced in the past, computerized adaptive testing or CAT uses today's technology to tailor test questions to your ability level and achieve faster, more accurate, and fairer test results. REx-PN uses CAT to administer the exam. Let's take a brief look at how REx-PN using CAT works. The goal of CAT is to identify each candidate's competence to practice safely by determining the difficulty level of questions a candidate can consistently answer correctly.

We've invited these candidates to a fitness center because we think their workout can quickly help you understand the principles behind CAT. Let's say each free weight represents a question, and we want to determine how heavy a weight you can lift, in other words, how difficult a question you can answer correctly. In this example, the trainer has established that this size weight represents the passing standard, and this correlates to the minimum competence needed to practice entry-level nursing.

The examination is designed to determine if you can consistently answer questions that are more difficult than the minimum competence standard, which in our example is this size weight. Lighter weights are easier to lift and represent questions that are less difficult than the passing standard. Heavier weights are more difficult to lift and represent questions that are more difficult than the passing standard.

Each question, like each free weight, reveals more about the true competence level of the candidate. With each answer, CAT's calculation of your entry-level competence becomes more precise. When you answer a question correctly, you've provided evidence that you could probably answer easier questions correctly. For that reason, the next question selected will be slightly more difficult.

Increasingly more difficult questions will be asked until you incorrectly answer a question. At that point, the next question asked will be slightly less difficult. If that question is answered correctly, then a slightly more difficult question will be asked next and so on throughout the remainder of your exam.

Everyone will miss some questions because questions are programmed to be increasingly difficult until a question is answered incorrectly. How computerized adaptive testing works is illustrated by this map,

which represents a candidate's progress. The passing standard is illustrated by the blue line. Questions below the line are questions that are less difficult than the passing standard.

Questions above the line are more difficult than the passing standard. The map represents both the difficulty of questions asked and the competence estimate of the candidate's performance. In this example, the candidate successfully answers a series of increasingly difficult questions. Then the candidate begins to answer some questions incorrectly. After answering the minimum number of questions required, the candidate reached a competence level that is significantly above the passing standard.

When competency is determined, the examination is completed, and the candidate passes. Conversely, when it is determined that the candidate has not shown that they have the needed entry-level competencies, the examination ends and the candidate does not pass. The number and difficulty of the questions will vary for each candidate. This is true for candidates above and below the passing standard.

Some candidates will be asked fewer questions because a competent pass or fail determination was made quickly, for they consistently answered questions either significantly above or below the passing standard. Other candidates, however, who had competence levels near the passing standard, either a little above or below will be asked more questions in order to determine their pass or fail results.

To ensure complete content coverage, all REx-PN candidates will answer a minimum of 90 and a maximum of 150 test questions. You'll be given up to four hours to complete the REx-PN. This includes a tutorial and all break times. A candidate will pass the REx-PN if they answer at least the minimum number of questions and achieves a competence level significantly above the passing standard, answers the maximum number of questions and achieves a competence level above the passing standard even if not significantly above, or answers at least the minimum number of questions, but runs out of time and has a competence level above the passing standard for the last question answered.

A candidate will not pass the REx-PN if they achieve a competence level significantly below the passing standard, answers the maximum number of questions and has a competence level below the passing standard, runs out of time and has a competence level that falls below the passing standard at the last question answered, or answers fewer than the minimum number of questions during the time allowed.

To protect the public, BCCNP and CNO require those candidates registering to practice to meet specific requirements. BCCNP and CNO use the REx-PN to assess whether the candidate has the knowledge, skills, and judgment essential for an entry-level nurse to safely meet clients' needs within the first year of practice.

Just like a well-designed fitness program can help prepare you for a healthy life, understanding how CAT works will better prepare you for the testing experience. At [ncsbn.org/rex-pn](http://ncsbn.org/rex-pn), you can review other materials to learn more about the exam. Good luck. 🎵

[music] 🎵