

Medical-Surgical Nursing Board Certification Examination

Test Content Outline

Effective Date: September 10, 2024

There are 150 questions on this examination. Of these, 125 are scored questions and 25 are pretest questions that are not scored. Pretest questions are used to determine how well these questions will perform before they are used on the scored portion of the examination. The pretest questions cannot be distinguished from those that will be scored, so it is important for a candidate to answer all questions. A candidate's score, however, is based solely on the 125 scored questions. Performance on pretest questions does not affect a candidate's score.

This Test Content Outline identifies the areas that are included on the examination. The percentage and number of questions in each of the major categories of the scored portion of the examination are also shown. *Note: The examples in parentheses are not all-inclusive and do not indicate importance.*

Category	Content Domain	Number of Questions	Percentage
I	Assessment and Diagnosis	49	39%
II	Planning, Implementation, and Evaluation	50	40%
III	Professional Role	26	21%
TOTAL		125	100%

I Assessment and Diagnosis

A. Knowledge

1. Fluids and electrolytes (eg, imbalances, disease-related, blood products)

B. Skill

1. Health history collection
2. Physical assessment (eg, vital signs, disease process, review of systems, activities of daily living)
3. Psychosocial assessment (eg, developmental stages, suicide risk, abuse, substance use disorders)
4. Cognitive assessment (eg, neuro status, developmental age, impairment)
5. Diagnostic and laboratory testing (eg, patient preparation, response to abnormal values, medication considerations)
6. Nursing diagnosis identification and prioritization

II Planning, Implementation, and Evaluation

A. Knowledge

1. Education topics (eg, self-management, acute and chronic conditions, population specific)
2. Patient safety measures (eg, screening tools, infection prevention, restraints, medical equipment)
3. Non-pharmacologic treatments (eg, complementary and alternative medicine, diversional activities)
4. Medication interactions and adverse effects (eg, pain management, polypharmacy, drug-drug, food-drug)
5. Health and wellness promotion (eg, screenings, vaccinations, healthy lifestyle modifications)

B. Skill

1. Nursing care planning (eg, interventions, modifications, outcomes)
2. Postoperative complication prevention and management (eg, bleeding, infection, emboli)
3. Patient teaching (eg, learning preferences, barriers, and evaluation of learning)

III Professional Role

A. Knowledge

1. Nursing ethics (eg, advocacy)
2. Evidence-based practice (eg, education, supporting materials)

B. Skill

1. Therapeutic communication (eg, patient- and family-centered care, cultural competence)
2. Evidence-based practice (eg, education, supporting materials)

Updated: August 28, 2025