Acute Care Nurse Practitioner Board Certification
Test Content Outline—effective date: March 1, 2010
Based on the 2008 NP Role Delineation Study

There are 175 questions on this examination. Of these, 150 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 150 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Domains of Practice</th>
<th>No. of Questions</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Nurse Practitioner/Patient Relationship</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>14.30%</td>
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<td>II</td>
<td>Assessment and Diagnosis</td>
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<td>III</td>
<td>Clinical Management</td>
<td>51</td>
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<td>IV</td>
<td>Healthcare Delivery</td>
<td>21</td>
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<td>V</td>
<td>Professional Responsibility</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>14.10%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>100%</td>
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</table>
Please note that the entire Test Content Outline is associated with major life span/problem areas as indicated in the following notes:

Note 1: System-Specific Health Problems

0. Nonspecific

A. Cardiovascular
   1. Acute coronary syndromes/coronary artery disease
   2. Hypertension
   3. Heart failure
   4. Valvular disease
   5. Peripheral vascular disease
   6. Deep-vein thrombosis
   7. Pulmonary hypertension
   8. Cardiac rhythm disturbances
   9. Pericarditis
   10. Tamponade
   11. Cardiomyopathy
   12. Aneurysm
   13. Endocarditis

B. Pulmonary
   1. Emphysema
   2. Asthma
   3. Bronchitis
   4. Respiratory infections
   5. Tuberculosis
   6. Pulmonary embolism
   7. Acute respiratory failure
   8. Acute respiratory distress syndrome
   9. Pneumothorax
   10. Pleural effusion

C. Endocrine
   1. Diabetes mellitus
   2. Thyroid diseases
   3. Addison’s disease (adrenal insufficiency)
   4. Syndrome of inappropriate antidiuretic hormone (SIADH)
   5. Cushing’s syndrome
   6. Pheochromocytoma
   7. Diabetes insipidus
   8. Endocrine imbalances

D. Neurologic
   1. Cerebrovascular disease (e.g., transient ischemic attack, stroke, aneurysm)
2. Neurologic inflammatory/degenerative processes (e.g., myasthenia gravis, Guillain-Barre syndrome, multiple sclerosis, Parkinson's disease)
3. Head trauma
4. Spinal cord trauma
5. Meningitis
6. Encephalopathy
7. Seizure disorder (including status epilepticus)
8. Herniated disk
9. Headache
10. Intracranial pressure (ICP)

E. Renal/genitourinary/gynecologic
1. Infection (e.g., EGSTD, renal, urinary)
2. Renal disease (e.g., renal insufficiency, acute tubular necrosis, end-stage renal failure)
3. Benign prostatic hypertrophy
4. Renal artery stenosis
5. Renal calculi

F. Gastrointestinal
1. Peptic ulcer disease
2. Hepatitis
3. Hepatic failure
4. Cholecystitis
5. Pancreatitis
6. Diverticulitis
7. Peritonitis
8. Mesenteric ischemia
9. Appendicitis
10. Ulcerative colitis
11. Bowel obstruction
12. Esophageal varices
13. Gastrointestinal bleeding
14. Cirrhosis

G. Hematology/oncology
1. Anemias
2. Cancers (e.g., lung, colon, breast, prostate, ovarian, lymphoid, melanoma)
3. Sickle cell disease
4. Coagulopathies

H. Immunology
1. Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome/human immunodeficiency virus infection
2. Rheumatoid arthritis
3. Other autoimmune diseases (e.g., systemic lupus erythematosus, scleroderma, sarcoidosis)
4. Acute allergic reactions
5. Immunosuppression

I. Musculoskeletal
1. Trauma
2. Degenerative joint diseases (e.g., rheumatoid arthritis, osteoarthritis, gout)

Note 2: Psychosocial Health Issues
0. Nonspecific
1. Violence
2. Depression
3. Substance abuse
4. Anxiety
5. Grief
6. Sexuality
7. Powerlessness
8. Altered mental status (e.g., delirium, dementia, psychosis)

Note 3: Common Problems in Acute Care
0. Nonspecific
1. Fever
2. Shock (e.g., cardiogenic, hemorrhagic, neurogenic, septic)
3. Nutritional imbalances
4. Fluid, electrolyte, and acid-base imbalances
5. Poisoning and drug toxicities
6. Wound management
7. Infections (e.g., community- and hospital-acquired, opportunistic, cellulitis)
8. Immobility
9. Palliative care (i.e., end-of-life care, including pain management)
10. Transplantation
11. Pain (i.e., acute and chronic)
Acute Care Nurse Practitioner Board Certification
Test Content Outline

I. Nurse Practitioner/Patient Relationship (14.30%)

A. Establish an effective professional therapeutic relationship
   Knowledge of:
   1. Components of a therapeutic relationship (e.g., mutual trust, professional boundaries, confidentiality, cultural respect)
   2. Strategies for establishing therapeutic relationships, considering patient preferences and culture

   Skills in:
   3. Establishing rapport
   4. Planning for patient and family psychosocial and spiritual needs

B. Maintain an effective professional therapeutic relationship
   Knowledge of:
   1. Advance directives
   2. Privacy and confidentiality
   3. How crisis situations affect therapeutic relationships

   Skills in:
   4. Serving as a patient advocate on issues related to healthcare management
   5. Communicating therapeutically
   6. Promoting patient autonomy
   7. Collaborating

II. Assessment and Diagnosis (23.60%)

A. Perform a comprehensive health assessment
   Knowledge of:
   1. Appropriate level of history and physical examination (focused vs. comprehensive)
   2. Anatomy and physiology
   3. Normal and abnormal assessment findings

   Skills in:
   4. Obtaining an appropriate medical history (e.g., interviewing, alternative sources of information)
   5. Performing an appropriate physical examination
   6. Performing an appropriate psychosocial assessment

B. Analyze patient-specific risks (e.g., malnutrition, surgical risk, iatrogenic complications, environmental risks)
   Knowledge of:
   1. Life stages
   2. Epidemiology

   Skills in:
3. Screening tests
4. Identifying risk factors (e.g., age-related, functional status, genetic)
5. Performing risk analyses

C. Develop differential diagnoses
   Knowledge of:
   1. Pathophysiology
   2. Invasive (e.g., lumbar puncture, bone marrow biopsy, bronchoscopy) and noninvasive diagnostic tests (e.g., stress testing, tilt table, pulmonary function studies, laboratory): indications, patient preparation, risk–benefit analysis, complications

   Skills in:
   3. Obtaining and appraising existing data to determine the need for testing
   4. Ordering appropriate diagnostic tests (considering cost–benefit ratio, pretest probability, and sensitivity and specificity of tests)
   5. Diagnostic reasoning (e.g., analyzing data, critical thinking, interpreting test data)
   6. Developing differential diagnoses
   7. Prioritizing differential diagnoses
   8. Confirming the clinical diagnosis

III. Clinical Management (33.90%)

A. Formulate and implement a patient-specific, cost-effective plan of care
   Knowledge of:
   1. Evidence-based practice
   2. Standards of care and clinical guidelines
   3. Invasive (e.g., intubation, central line insertion, wound debridement) and noninvasive procedures (e.g., orthopedic stabilization, reduction of dislocation, enhanced external counterpulsation); indications; patient preparation; risk–benefit analysis; complications

   Skills in:
   4. Managing complex acute, chronic, and critical conditions
   5. Prescribing appropriate pharmacologic treatment
   6. Incorporating complementary therapies into the plan of care
   7. Providing appropriate symptom management
   8. Prescribing assistive devices, life support devices, or both (e.g., ventilator, bilevel positive airway pressure device, pacemaker, peripherally inserted central catheter [PICC] line, inferior vena cava [IVC] filter)
   9. Obtaining appropriate services (e.g., occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech therapy, nutrition support, home health services)
   10. Integrating evidence-based care into practice
   11. Formulating interdisciplinary discharge plans
   12. Facilitating appropriate care at the end of life
   13. Documenting care provided

B. Incorporate health promotion and health protection in the plan of care
   Knowledge of:
   1. Health promotion activities (e.g., vaccines, lifestyle modification)
   2. Common risks (e.g., venous thromboembolism prophylaxis, decubitus ulcer, stress ulcer prophylaxis, nosocomial infection, adverse drug reactions)
   3. Evidence-based practice related to the management of risk factors
4. Disease-related and age-related risk factors

Skills in:
5. Modifying the patient’s plan of care based on identified risk factors
6. Promoting follow-up
7. Incorporating care to prevent exacerbation of coexisting conditions

C. Provide patient and family education

Knowledge of:
1. Expected and unexpected complications related to the patient’s illness trajectory
2. Factors that promote patient adherence and learning
3. Self-care management strategies
4. Considerations related to adult learners (e.g., barriers to communication)

Skills in:
5. Determining learning needs
6. Synthesizing advanced knowledge for the patient
7. Ordering consults and additional supports for patient education (e.g., cardiac rehabilitation, dietary instruction)
8. Tailoring content to meet patient and family needs and goals
9. Coaching the patient through behavior changes

D. Evaluate and modify the plan of care

Knowledge of:
1. Patient-specific disease process
2. Cost-effectiveness

Skills in:
3. Identifying desired outcomes for the patient (e.g., prognosis, goals of care)
4. Evaluating patient responses to teaching
5. Identifying and responding to complications
6. Using standards of care and guidelines to evaluate outcomes of care
7. Using evidence-based practice to evaluate outcomes of care
8. Using quality indicators to evaluate outcomes of care

IV. Healthcare Delivery (14.10%)

A. Coordinate patient-focused care among healthcare providers and between healthcare settings

Knowledge of:
1. Healthcare policy
2. Available resources
3. Regulatory and accrediting guidelines (e.g., Joint Commission, Department of Health)

Skills in:
4. Communicating appropriate care-related information to other providers
5. Promoting the efficient use of resources to achieve optimal outcomes
6. Incorporating current and appropriate information technology in the provision of care
7. Negotiating to implement the plan of care with the patient, family, and interdisciplinary team
8. Navigating the healthcare system on behalf of the patient

B. Evaluate and influence healthcare policy on the delivery of care
Knowledge of:
1. Federal and state regulations
2. Healthcare financing (e.g., billing, coding, reimbursement, third-party payors)
3. Concepts in healthcare policy

Skills in:
4. Interpreting and evaluating institutional, federal, and state regulations
5. Identifying issues affecting access to care (e.g., healthcare financing, distance to care, availability of providers and services, regulations)

C. Promote quality health care
Knowledge of:
1. Quality improvement processes (e.g., root cause analysis, sentinel events)
2. Safety initiatives (e.g., Joint Commission, Institute for Healthcare Improvement)

Skills in:
3. Engaging in continuous quality improvement
4. Responding appropriately to identified safety problems
5. Managing conflicts
6. Communicating effectively across disciplines
7. Preventing errors

V. Professional Responsibility (14.10%)
A. Function within the acute care nurse practitioner scope of practice
Knowledge of:
1. Scope and standards of acute care nurse practitioner practice

Skills in:
2. Credentialing and privileging
3. Identifying situations outside the scope of practice
4. Managing competing demands appropriately and effectively (e.g., time management, establishing priorities)
5. Advocating for the acute care nurse practitioner role
6. Collaborating with other healthcare providers (e.g., obtaining consultation, serving as a resource, interdisciplinary teamwork)

B. Incorporate ethical and legal principles into clinical practice
Knowledge of:
1. Ethical and legal principles
2. Standards of professional behavior (e.g., patient abandonment, confidentiality)
3. Principles of risk management
4. Medical futility

Skills in:
5. Obtaining informed consent
6. Resolving ethical dilemmas
7. Protecting patient autonomy

C. Apply evidence into clinical practice
Knowledge of:
1. Components of evidence-based practice (e.g., research, patient preferences, standards of care)
2. Research methods

Skills in:
3. Analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating evidence
4. Integrating evidence into practice