

Summary of Modifications to the NCLEX-RN® and NCLEX-PN® Examinations Starting Oct. 1, 2020

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, NCSBN introduced several carefully evaluated and tested modifications to the NCLEX examinations.

To ensure the reliability and legal defensibility of the exam, NCSBN conducted numerous simulations and comparisons against historical NCLEX results along with continuous evaluation of the modifications to the exam put into place during the COVID-19 pandemic. All modifications and live exam results confirmed the consistency of measurement properties and did not identify any negative impact on candidate results or testing experiences.

These modifications are set to expire on Sept. 30, 2020. Based on the continued statistical and psychometric strength of the modifications, NCLEX exams will retain some of the characteristics of the modified exam while reinstating some of the essential aspects of the exam that were put on hold because of the pandemic. The exam will continue to utilize the computer adaptive testing (CAT) methodology for administration and scoring. The NCLEX Test Plans will remain the same and the passing standard will not change.

Beginning Oct. 1, 2020, the following modifications will be made to both the NCLEX-RN and NCLEX-PN examinations:

- Pretest items will be reintroduced. Each candidate will get 15 pretest items in their exam.
- The minimum number of scored items will be 60, and the maximum number of scored items will be 130.
- Due to the addition of the 15 pretest items, the minimum length exam will be 75 items and the maximum length exam will be 145 items.
- Examination time will be five hours.
- Given the changes to the maximum exam length and the testing time, the current Run Out of Time (R.O.O.T) scoring rule is no longer applicable.
 - The final ability estimate will be computed from the responses to all completed items. Those scoring above the passing standard will have a passing exam, otherwise the exam will be scored as a fail.
- The voluntary NGN Special Research Section will be reintroduced.
 - We encourage all candidates to participate in this important research effort for the nursing profession. Additional information about this important research can be viewed at [NGN FAQs](#).
- The NCLEX Tutorial will be replaced with a general guide and test taking tips.
 - All candidates are strongly encouraged to take the [online tutorial](#) to practice with the item types prior to sitting for the exam.

If you have any specific questions about the examination changes, please contact NCLEX information at nclexinfo@ncsbn.org.