

Psychiatric-Mental Health Nursing Board Certification Examination

Test Content Outline

Effective Date: September 16, 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	28	22%
II	Planning	26	21%
III	Implementation	58	46%
IV	Evaluation	13	10%
TOTAL		125	100%*

**Total does not come to 100 because of rounding.*

I Assessment and Diagnosis

A. Knowledge

1. Developmental stages (eg, Erikson, Piaget)
2. Physiological causes of psychiatric symptoms (eg, urinary tract infection, thyroid dysfunction)
3. Psychiatric disorders (eg, thought, mood, neurocognitive, personality, addictions)
4. Coping and defense mechanisms (eg, denial, rationalization, projection)

B. Skill

1. Assessment tools and techniques (eg, mental status exam, safety risk assessment, trauma history, diagnostic studies)

II Planning

A. Knowledge

1. Client-centered care (eg, strengths-based, client-stated goals, support network)
2. Educational concepts (eg, motivation, readiness to learn, group dynamics)
3. Cultural competence (eg, gender-sensitive care, religious beliefs, ethnicity, socioeconomic status)

B. Skill

1. Communication barrier management (eg, cognition, literacy, language, vision)
2. Treatment planning (eg, SMART goals, interdisciplinary interventions, available support systems)

III Implementation

A. Knowledge

1. Treatment modalities (eg, recovery model, trauma-informed care, cognitive behavioral therapy)
2. Integrative interventions (eg, mindfulness, relaxation, aromatherapy)
3. Neurostimulation (eg, transcranial magnetic stimulation, electroconvulsive therapy)

B. Skill

1. Care coordination (eg, handoff communication, community resources identification)
2. Therapeutic environment management (eg, milieu, safety, structure, culture)

3. Therapeutic communication (eg, active listening, reflection, motivational interviewing)
4. Medication management (eg, reconciliation, adverse reaction identification, indications, contraindications, lab values)
5. Psychoeducational group facilitation (eg, stress management, relapse prevention)
6. Health promotion (eg, self-care, tobacco cessation, substance use prevention)
7. Emergent situation and crisis management (eg, behavioral, medical)

IV Evaluation

A. Knowledge

1. Legal and ethical considerations (eg, self-determination, informed consent, documentation)
2. Process improvement (eg, quality variances, serious reportable events)

B. Skill

1. Outcome measurement, ongoing assessment (eg, symptom reduction), and revision of care plan

Updated: August 28, 2025