

Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurse Practitioner Board Certification Examination

Test Content Outline
Effective Date: April 28, 2023

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 included 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. *Note: The examples in parentheses are not all inclusive and do not indicate importance.*

Category	Content Domain	Number of Questions	Percentage
I	Scientific Foundation	33	22%
II	Advanced Practice Skills	41	27%
III	Diagnosis and Treatment	33	22%
IV	Psychotherapy and Related Theories	17	11%
V	Ethics, Legal Principles, and Cultural Care	26	17%
TOTAL		150	100%

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

In accordance with the APRN Consensus Model, this examination will be developed in consideration of the below secondary classifications, whenever applicable.

Body Systems	Drug Agents	Age Group
1. Cardiovascular	1. Analgesic	1. Infant
2. Endocrine	2. Cardiovascular	2. Preschool
3. Gastrointestinal	3. Endocrine	3. School-Age
4. Genitourinary and Renal	4. Gastrointestinal	4. Adolescent
		5. Young Adult
5. Head, Eyes, Ears, Nose, and Throat	5. Musculoskeletal	(including late adolescent & emancipated minors)
6. Hematopoietic	6. Neurological	6. Adult
7. Immune	7. Psychiatric	7. Older Adult
8. Integumentary	8. Respiratory	8. Frail Elderly
9. Musculoskeletal		
10. Neurological		
11. Psychiatric		
12. Reproductive		
13. Respiratory		

I Scientific Foundation

A. Knowledge

1. Advanced pathophysiology
2. Advanced pharmacology (eg, contraindications, interactions, adverse effects)
3. Advanced psychopharmacology (eg, pharmacokinetics, pharmacodynamics, extrapyramidal symptoms [EPS], neuroleptic malignant syndrome [NMS])
4. Neurodevelopment
5. Neuroanatomy
6. Neurophysiology
7. Psychogenomics (eg, gene-drug interactions, heritability)

B. Skill

1. Advanced physical assessment

II Advanced Practice Skills

A. Skill

1. Clinical interviewing (eg, open-ended questions, nonverbal communication, motivational interviewing)
2. Health promotion and disease prevention (eg, models, strategies)
3. Mental health screening tool selection and interpretation (eg, PHQ-9, GAD-7, Vanderbilt ADHD)
4. Mental status exam
5. Psychiatric emergency management (eg, suicidal ideation, homicidal ideation)
6. Psychoeducation (eg, presentation method, topic selection)
7. Recovery and resilience promotion
8. Risk assessment
9. Substance use screening tool selection and interpretation (eg, Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test [AUDIT], Drug Abuse Screening Test [DAST], Clinical Institute Withdrawal Assessment Alcohol Scale [CIWA], Clinical Opiate Withdrawal Scale [COWS])

III Diagnosis and Treatment

A. Knowledge

1. DSM-5-TR diagnostic criteria
2. Complementary and alternative treatments

B. Skill

1. Diagnostic and laboratory test selection and interpretation
2. Diagnosis (including differentials)
3. Evidence-based practice (eg, medication dosing, off-label use, psychotherapy selection)
4. Psychopharmacotherapeutic management (eg, selection, monitoring)
5. Pharmacotherapeutic management (eg, selection, monitoring)

IV Psychotherapy and Related Theories

A. Knowledge

1. Psychotherapy principles (eg, cognitive behavioral therapy, humanistic, interpersonal, behavioral)
2. Change theories (eg, Transtheoretical Model, Lewin's Change Theory)
3. Developmental theories
4. Family theories (eg, structural, narrative)

B. Skill

1. Therapeutic alliance development and management (eg, empathy, boundaries, psychotherapy facilitation, trauma-informed approach)

V Ethics, Legal Principles, and Cultural Care

A. Knowledge

1. Patient's Bill of Rights (eg, informed consent, treatment options)
2. Scope of confidentiality (eg, release of information, duty to warn)
3. ANA Scope and Standards of Practice: Psychiatric-Mental Health Nursing

B. Skill

1. Cultural and spiritual competence (eg, differences in belief systems, existentialism, social determinants of mental health, risk factors, barriers)
2. Equity, diversity, and inclusion (eg, specific populations, sexual orientation, gender identity)
3. Ethics in clinical decision making (eg, involuntary treatment, least restrictive care, decision making capacity, bioethical principles)
4. Patient advocacy (eg, educational accommodations, disabilities accommodations, FMLA)

Last Updated: 09/09/2025