

Policy and Procedure

SON OP 30.190 - Exam Policies and Procedures

PURPOSE The purpose of the School of Nursing Testing Policy and Procedure is to define exam administration and review guidelines. The Texas Board of Nursing requires the program of study shall be based on sound educational principles.

REVIEW The policy will be reviewed biennially by September 1 of each even numbered year by the Associate Dean with recommendations for revisions forwarded to the Dean or his/her designee.

POLICY/PROCEDURE

This policy provides guidelines to be utilized for exam administration and exam review. Appropriate accommodations are made for students who meet criteria for Americans with Disabilities Act. This policy only applies to courses utilizing traditional exams for assessment of student learning.

A. Exam Development Protocol

- Each course utilizing exams as an assessment of student learning will administer no less than 2 unit exams and no more than 4 unit exams each semester. Total testing time, inclusive of standardized exams, will not exceed 20% of scheduled course contact hours.
- Unit exams will allow for 2 minutes per question to fit within the class's scheduled time.
- In support of national competencies outlined by the NCLEX-RN, faculty are encouraged to evaluate students according to the Client Needs Categories that are applicable to their respective course.
- Exam items will be derived from course Expected Student Outcomes (ESO's) which support overall Expected Program Outcomes (EPO's) and nursing competencies. Each semester is designed to expand upon the knowledge gained in previous semesters, therefore, questions may reflect outcomes and expectations from previous courses within the nursing program and pre-requisite courses such as Anatomy and Physiology.
- The Hunt School of Nursing will utilize the NSCBN NCLEX-RN test plan as a guide:

Client Needs Category	Percentage of Items from each Category/Subcategory
Safe and Effective Care Environment	
• Management of Care	18%
• Safety and Infection Control	13%
Health Promotion and Maintenance	9%
Psychosocial Integrity	9%
Physiological Integrity	
• Basic Care and Comfort	9%
• Pharmacological and Parenteral	16%
• Reduction of Risk Potential	12%
• Physiological Adaptation	14%

NCSCN Test Plan ²

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B. Exam Writing Style Protocol

- Exams may be structured using a variety of testing formats to align with NCLEX-RN and NextGEN items (e.g. multiple choice, hot spot, drag and drop, video vignettes, fill in the blank, extended multiple choice, matrix, drop-down, highlight, bowtie, and trend etc.). However, the majority of items should be in the multiple-choice format. 'Alternative' items similar to those that might be seen on the NCLEX and standardized exams should be used.
 - Number of alternative items per exam**
 - Faculty are encouraged to expose students to item types in class prior to use in an assessment.
 - Alternate formats should make up no more than 18% of exam (e.g. Select all that apply, hot spot, drag and drop, video vignettes, fill-in-the blank, extended multiple choice, matrix, drop-down, highlight, bowtie, and trend etc.)
 - NextGen case studies should be included in exams based on table below.

Per Unit Exam	Junior I	Junior II	Senior I	Senior II
Next Gen Case study with 3 questions per case	0	2	3	3

- Use of exam question banks for the assigned textbook are permitted but faculty are required to modify the item(s) selected for an exam.
- Prior to posting an exam, faculty are encouraged to have a colleague review their exam.
- Item options, the correct answer and distracters should be of similar length and maintain consistency in grammar (e.g. verb tense, etc.).
- All nursing course examinations should be given in a manner and style consistent with the 2023 NCLEX-RN Test Plan (available at NCSBN.org) and consists of a minimum of 90% NCLEX-RN style questions. Exam items will follow NCLEX-RN² item writing guidelines, including, but not limited to:
 - Use of "client" instead of "patient"
 - Use of neutral, universal language, avoiding bias language, colloquialisms, and stereotypes
 - Client age and/or gender should be provided as needed when relevant to the question
 - Proper grammar and spelling
 - Abbreviations should be spelled out
 - Positive wording (no EXCEPT or NOT questions) should be used
 - Bold items that include key words such as best, most, essential, first, priority, immediately, highest, initial, next, refute, increased, decreased and support
 - Use of Generic medication names only, may use general classifications of medications
 - Calculation Items may request recording items using a whole number, one (or two) decimal places
 - Calculation items should be rounded at the end of the calculation
 - Items that contain a numeric laboratory value will include the corresponding normal reference range

C. Test plans

The test plan will be provided to the students and include:

- Content covered on the exam
- Percentage of exam items pertaining to each topic

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D. Blueprints

A blueprint should be constructed and used to develop the examination. At minimum, the blueprint will include:

1. Concepts/chapters covered on the exam
 2. Number of exam items pertaining to each concept/chapter
 3. Exam items should be mapped to the following:
 - a. Nursing Process
 - b. NCLEX-RN Client Needs categories (1st and 2nd levels)
 - c. Cognitive operational levels
 - d. Current BSN Essentials (Domain, Competency, and Sub-competency)
 - e. Content area
- Cognitive Operational Levels

Per Unit exam	First Semester	Second Semester	Third Semester	Fourth Semester
Remembering/ Understanding	Up to 30-40%	Up to 20-30%	Up to 10-20%	Up to 10%
Applying	Up to 60-70%	Up to 70-80%	Up to 80-90%	Up to 90-100%
Analyzing and above	Up to 10-20%	Up to 20-30%	Up to 30-40%	Up to 50%
Dosage Calculation	Up to 5 questions, unless a Dosage Cal exam/ quiz	Up to 5 questions	Up to 5 questions	Up to 10 questions
Mastery items Less than 10%				

E. Time frames

- Per NCSBN guidelines, exams administered via the TTUHSC online learning platform, students will be given 2 minutes per test item. Students requiring more time will be advised to request accommodations from Disability Services. ²
- For standardized examinations, the time allotted will vary based on the company's stated standard or determined by the course facilitator.
- Within a reasonable time-frame — recommended two weeks but at least seven [7] days prior to scheduled assessment — faculty will provide the students with the following information:
 - i. Exam delivery method if it deviates from standard practice.
 - ii. Number of items on the exam

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F. Scoring Models

NCLEX items have multiple scoring models.

- Plus/minus (+/-): When test takers may select unlimited options, the +/- rule applies. Test takers earn 1 point for each correct response, but 1 point is subtracted for every incorrect option selected. The items score is the sum of the correct responses minus the sum of the incorrect responses selected. There is not negative scoring, making 0 the lowest score a test taker can receive on an item. (Select all that apply, grouping, Multiple-Response Matrix) ²
- Zero/one (0/1): The ability to select options is limited. The test taker earns 1 point for each correct response selected, but they are not penalized additionally for making incorrect responses. The items score is the sum of the correct responses. Responses are Correct or Incorrect (multiple choice, Multiple- response Select N, Drop-Down Cloze/Table, Highlight Text/Table Select N, Bowtie). ²

G. Exam Administration Protocol

- Tests will be given to the class collectively on the computerized examination platform adopted by the Hunt SON. In the event of software or equipment failure, alternative methods may be used by should be the exception and not the norm.
- Faculty will schedule testing times through the appropriate SON staff to ensure room reservations prior to the beginning of each semester.
- Faculty should notify relevant SON staff if an exam has been rescheduled or cancelled.
- Testing dates and times will be stated in the course calendar. Faculty will communicate the location for each exam at least 24 hours prior to the exam.
- To better prepare the student-for the NCLEX testing format, unit and final exams will be administered as follows:
 - Questions will be given to the student one at a time.
 - The student must answer each question before going to the next question.
 - The student will not be allowed to return to previous questions.
 - Any question not answered by the student will be marked as incorrect.
 - Questions will not be scrambled and administer the same items in the same order to facilitate an accurate measurement of students' knowledge and skills.⁴
 - Students may checkout an English dictionary prior to exams. Dictionaries are to be inspected by exam proctors prior to exam.

H. Proctors

- Faculty must secure up to 2 proctors to uphold the integrity of the examination. The proctor/student ratio should be 1/45.
- Confirm identities of all students entering the exam environment, (Texas Tech ID/ Exemplify ID and Password
- Ensure adequate spacing between students
- Ensure students are aware of time limit on exam
- Describe the procedures for students needing a bathroom break (one student at a time, accompanied by one proctor to the bathroom).
- Ensure that students do not have access to cell phones, smart watches, wireless earbuds, and smart glasses.

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- Supervise the students taking the exam. A proctor must be physically present at all times while the test is active, including viewing of rationales.
- Computer and technical assistance are allowed for computerized exams. The time allotted to complete the exam will not be adjusted.

I. Standardized examinations

Per Senate Bill 1429 in the 88th Texas Legislature, standardized exams shall not be used as a graduation requirement or to deny students an affidavit of graduation. Standardized exams (such as HESI, ATI etc.) will not account for more than 10% of a course grade.

J. Remediation

Students scoring less than 78% on an exam must make an appointment with the course facilitator. Appointments must be made within 72 hours (3 business days) after exam grades have been released. The test review must be completed/reviewed at least 48 hours (2 class days) before the next scheduled exam. Students who are unsuccessful in exams and do not meet with the course facilitator within the timeframe will be at risk for course failure.

K. Grade release and Review

- Exam results will be returned to students no later than one week after the exam.
- Exam results will not be immediately available to students through Exemplify[®], Grades will be released in CANVAS after the Item Analysis has been completed.
- Grades will be entered and calculated based upon the formatting of the LMS (Two decimal places). The nursing program does NOT round grades.
- Faculty are not required to utilize class time to review exams. If a class review is not offered, students may make an appointment with the course faculty to review the exam concepts in person.
- All exam reviews must be in-person and proctored to ensure security of exam items. The type of exam review is at the instructor's discretion and may include as a group in class, in small subgroups, or individually. Students are not allowed to make notes or access electronic devices (phones, tablets, etc.) during the exam review to prevent threats to exam item integrity.

L. Exam Analysis Protocol

Faculty are required to complete an analysis of each exam after all students have completed the exam. Faculty are encouraged to consult evidence-based references on how to complete the test analysis and make decisions based on the results.

- *Webinar*
 - Nurse Tim Inc -> Item Analysis Made Easy! By Karin Sherrill
- *Books*
 - Teaching in Nursing: A Guide for Faculty by Billings and Halstead
 - The Nurse Educator's Guide to Assessing Learning Outcomes by McDonald
 - Evaluation and Testing in Nursing Education by Oermann, Gaberson & Gagne
- An item analysis must be completed for each question. (ie: point biserial, discrimination index and difficulty index, upper and lower percentage of students answering correctly).
- Questions that perform poorly will be **reviewed**. Criteria for review includes any of the following
 - Less than 30% of the class answers the question correctly excluding alternative NextGen format questions which will be reviewed and adjusted per faculty discretion

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- Less than 100% of the class answers a safety question correctly.
- Items that do not discriminate between low- and top-performers
- Question had poor statistical analysis using KR coefficient for reliability
- Adjustments may not exceed more than 6% of question.
- If adjustments are made, (e.g., accept more than one answer, etc.) the faculty is encouraged to keep an ongoing, written-record of the modified item(s) for use on future examinations and opportunities for didactic improvement.
- Each exam must be reviewed for reliability using current measures of reliability ¹.

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References

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