

# 6 FACTS YOU NEED TO KNOW

## NCLEX FAQs

**DON'T FEAR THE NCLEX.  
UNDERSTAND IT SO YOU CAN  
STRENGTHEN STUDENTS' SUCCESS.**

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### WHAT IS THE NCLEX?

**The National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX) is the test students take after graduation.**

The National Council of the State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN) administers the exam. Its purpose is to ensure test-takers are prepared to begin work as entry-level nurses. Rather than testing knowledge, the NCLEX measures how well a candidate thinks like a nurse.

2

### WHY IS THE NCLEX IMPORTANT?

**Accreditation agencies use first-time NCLEX pass rates to evaluate nursing programs.**

Schools also use high NCLEX pass rates to attract nursing candidates. Plus, high pass rates can give schools bragging rights. Statistics of or near 100% can help an institution earn a spot on lists of "best nursing programs" in a state, which is a strong marketing factor for a school.

3

### WHAT IS ACCREDITATION?

**A review process requiring programs to show they are meeting regulatory requirements and standards.**

Accreditation ensures nursing schools educate students at the same level and compares programs on a common standard of quality. Agencies also push programs to maintain and continually improve the quality of nursing education they deliver.

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### WHAT MAKES THE NCLEX DIFFERENT FROM MOST TESTS STUDENTS TAKE?

**The exam is computer-adaptive, selecting questions based on a test-taker's answers.**

As the test progresses, it ultimately determines the candidate's level of competence.

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### WHAT IS THE FOCUS OF THE TEST?

**It is based on a framework of "Meeting client needs" and organized into Client Needs Categories.**

The Client Needs Categories are broken out in terms of 4 specific areas of practice, 2 of which are narrowed down into subcategories (with slight variations between the RN and PN versions).

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### WHAT IS THE NCLEX TEST PLAN?

**A blueprint updated every 3 years that helps nursing programs and students prepare for the real exam.**

It guides programs and organizations in creating practice questions (known as items), especially in terms of different types of questions. While much of the NCLEX is devoted to standard, 4-option, multiple-choice items, alternate-format questions also are used.