



NATIONAL COSMETOLOGY  
THEORY EXAMINATION  
CANDIDATE INFORMATION BULLETIN (CIB)

**EXAMINATION CONTENT AND IMPORTANT INSTRUCTIONS**

*Please visit your examination provider's website for the most current bulletin prior to testing.*

The National Cosmetology Theory Examination is the licensure examination for Cosmetologists, which is developed by the National-Interstate Council of State Boards of Cosmetology (NIC). This bulletin contains **IMPORTANT INFORMATION** regarding the examination, including content outline covered by the theory examination, sample questions and answers. The time allowed for the Cosmetology Theory Examination is **90 minutes**.

For each NIC National Theory Examination, there are TWO (2) parts to every Candidate Information Bulletin (CIB) stored as separate documents:

- **Examination Content** and **Important Instructions** – This document provides information about the scope of content covered in the Theory examination and information and guidelines related to administration of the Theory examination.
- **References** – This document provides a list of references used to develop and support the content covered in the examination. The references are always the same for the Theory and Practical examinations.

**BE CERTAIN TO DOWNLOAD AND/OR PRINT, AND REVIEW BOTH DOCUMENTS THAT MAKE UP THE NIC EXAMINATION CIB.**

**PLEASE REVIEW ALL INFORMATION CAREFULLY!**

**IMPORTANT INSTRUCTIONS**

- Do not leave the examination area without permission. Permission must be obtained to leave the examination area for any reason, including restroom usage or at the completion of the examination. Picture ID is required for re-entry into examination.
- With the exception of verbal instructions, the proctors and examination administration personnel are not allowed to communicate with candidates.
- If you have an emergency situation please notify the proctor.
- The following provides examples of materials and actions that are prohibited during the examination administration:
  - Possession of cellular phones, pagers, tablets, computers, projectors, cameras, or any other electronic or recording devices, printed materials, or handwritten notes.
  - Communicating to other candidates.
  - Exhibiting disruptive behavior.
    - *The above referenced items or actions are not an exhaustive list. Failure to comply with any of these conditions or exhibiting ANY behavior that suggests an effort to cheat will result in your immediate dismissal from the examination and your actions reported to the proper authorities.*

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**COSMETOLOGY THEORY EXAMINATION  
CONTENT OUTLINE**

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The following outlines the scope of content covered by the NIC National Cosmetology Theory Examination. The percentages represent the percentage of items from each domain. The examination is comprised of 110 items of which 100 items are weighted and contribute to the candidate's final score.

**DOMAIN 1: SCIENTIFIC CONCEPTS (30%)**

**A. Infection Control and Safety Practices**

1. Identify how disease and infection are caused and transmitted
2. Recognize purpose and/or effects of infection control principles
  - a. Levels of infection control:
    - i. Sanitation/Cleaning
    - ii. Disinfection
    - iii. Sterilization
  - b. Process of infection control:
    - i. Recognize when cross-contamination occurs
    - ii. Prevention of cross-contamination
    - iii. Differentiate between the purpose of single- and multi-use tools
3. Apply blood contact procedures
4. Identify requirements of government agencies:
  - a. OSHA standards
  - b. EPA

**B. Human Anatomy and Physiology**

1. Identify function and structure of the:
  - a. Hair and scalp
  - b. Skin
  - c. Nails
2. Identify signs and symptoms of conditions, disorders, and diseases related to:
  - a. Hair and scalp
  - b. Skin
  - c. Nails
3. Identify muscles and joints and their functions related to:
  - a. Head and face
  - b. Arms and hands
  - c. Legs and feet
4. Identify functions of:
  - a. Nervous system
  - b. Circulatory system

**C. Basic Chemistry of Products Used in Cosmetology**

1. Recognize purpose and effects of products and ingredients
2. Recognize interaction between chemicals
3. Recognize physical interactions with chemicals
4. Recognize chemical reactions (e.g., overexposure, chemical burn)
5. Recognize the chemical pH scale

**DOMAIN 2: HAIR CARE AND SERVICES (40%)**

A. Client Consultation, Analysis and Documentation for Hair Care Services

1. Evaluate condition of client's hair and scalp (i.e., assessment)
2. Recognize conditions that would prohibit service (i.e., contraindications)
3. Determine services or products
4. Recognize purpose and interpret results of preliminary tests (e.g., predisposition and strand tests)
5. Establish/Maintain client records (e.g., service history, client card, medical history)

B. Tools used in Hair Care Services

1. Identify function, purpose and infection control procedures of tools used in hair services:
  - a. Equipment (e.g., chair, workstation)
  - b. Implements (e.g., razors, shears, combs/brushes)
  - c. Supplies and materials (e.g., towels, drape, neck strips)
  - d. Electrical tools (e.g. irons, blow dryers, clippers)
  - e. Proper disinfection procedures
2. Recognize safe practices for use of tools (i.e., equipment, implements, supplies, ergonomics)

C. Hair Care

1. Apply knowledge of principles and procedures for shampooing and conditioning
2. Apply knowledge of principles and procedures for scalp treatments and scalp massage
3. Apply knowledge of draping (e.g. chemical, shampoo, cutting)

D. Hair Design

1. Apply knowledge of principles, procedures and safety of hair cutting and shaping
2. Apply knowledge of principles, procedures and safety of hair styling:
  - a. Wet styling
  - b. Thermal styling
  - c. Natural hair styling (e.g., braiding)
3. Apply knowledge of principles, procedures and safety related to hair enhancements:
  - a. Extension application and removal:
    - i. Braid and sew attachment
    - ii. Bonding
    - iii. Fusion bonding
    - iv. Tube shrinking
    - v. Linking
4. Apply principles of balance and design (e.g. facial shape, physical structure)

E. Chemical Services

1. Apply knowledge of principles, procedures and safety for:
  - a. Hair coloring (including corrective color)
  - b. Hair lightening
  - c. Foiling
  - d. Chemical hair relaxing/restructuring and curl reduction
    - i. Hydroxide
    - ii. Thio
    - iii. Keratin
  - e. Chemical waving/texturizing:
    - i. Alkaline
    - ii. Acid
    - iii. Non-thio
    - iv. Keratin

**DOMAIN 3: SKIN CARE AND SERVICES (15%)**

A. Client Consultation, Analysis and Documentation for Skin Care Services

1. Evaluate condition of client's skin:
  - a. Skin type
  - b. Skin condition
2. Identify contraindications:
  - a. Disorders
  - b. Diseases
3. Determine services and products
4. Establish/Maintain client records (e.g., service history, client card, medical history)

B. Tools used for skin care services

1. Identify function, purpose and infection control procedures of tools:
  - a. Equipment (e.g., chair, steamer)
  - b. Implements (e.g., tweezers, brushes, extractors)
  - c. Supplies, products, and materials (e.g., creams, masks, towels, body and hair drapes)
  - d. Proper disinfection procedures
2. Recognize and understand safe practices for use of tools (i.e., equipment, implements, supplies, and ergonomics)

C. Facial skin care services

1. Apply knowledge of principles, procedures and safety for:
  - a. Cleansing
  - b. Steaming
  - c. Exfoliation
  - d. Extraction
  - e. Massage
  - f. Masks
  - g. Hair Removal:
    - i. Tweezing
    - ii. Depilatory
    - iii. Hard wax
    - iv. Soft wax
  - h. Makeup application
  - i. Electrical equipment

**DOMAIN 4: NAIL CARE AND SERVICES (15%)**

A. Client Consultation, Analysis and Documentation for nail care services

1. Evaluate condition of client's nails
2. Identify contraindications:
  - a. Disorders
  - b. Diseases
3. Determine services and products
4. Establish/Maintain client records (e.g., service history, client card, medical history)

B. Tools used in nail care services

1. Identify function, purpose and infection control procedures of tools:
  - a. Equipment (e.g., workstation, pedicure basin)
  - b. Implements (e.g., nippers, file)
  - c. Supplies, products, and materials (e.g., towels, creams, polish)
  - d. Proper disinfection procedures
2. Recognize and understand safe practices for use of tools (i.e., equipment, implements, supplies, and ergonomics)

C. Apply knowledge of principles, procedures and safety for basic manicure and pedicure

D. Apply knowledge of principles, procedures and safety for application, maintenance, and removal of nail enhancements:

1. Nail tips
2. Acrylics

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## COSMETOLOGY THEORY EXAMINATION SAMPLE QUESTIONS

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The following sample questions are similar to those presented in the NIC Cosmetology Theory Examination. Each item has four answer options. Only one option is correct or the answer. An answer key is provided following the sample questions. Performance on the sample questions may not represent performance on the NIC examination.

1. Which of the following will reinforce and reconstruct the hair shaft?  
(A) Scalp treatment  
(B) Balancing shampoo  
(C) Hair brushing  
(D) Protein conditioner
2. When damaged, which of the following will cause the hair growth to be inhibited?  
(A) Papilla  
(B) Shaft  
(C) Cuticle  
(D) Arrector pili
3. A condition caused by an infestation of head lice is  
(A) tinea barbae.  
(B) scabies.  
(C) pediculous capitalis.  
(D) tinea capitis.
4. Debris is removed from tools and implements using which of the following procedures?  
(A) Cleaning  
(B) Disinfection  
(C) Sterilization  
(D) Decontamination
5. What implement adds shine and smooths wavy ridges on the natural nail during a manicure?  
(A) Coarse file  
(B) Metal file  
(C) Nail brush  
(D) Nail buffer
6. What is another name for the dermis layer of the skin?  
(A) Spiny layer  
(B) Horny layer  
(C) True skin  
(D) Basal cell
7. The massage movement intended to soothe muscles is  
(A) petrissage.  
(B) tapotement.  
(C) friction.  
(D) effleurage.

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8. What product can be used to equalize the porosity of the hair?
- (A) Shampoo
  - (B) Fillers
  - (C) Lightener
  - (D) Developer

**KEY: 1: D, 2: A, 3: C, 4: A, 5: D, 6: C, 7: D, 8: B**

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To take the NIC Cosmetology Online Practice Exam (English Only) [CLICK HERE](https://www.iqttesting.com/registrationv2008/quickregister.aspx) or go to:  
<https://www.iqttesting.com/registrationv2008/quickregister.aspx> (\$39.00 fee applies)

For assistance, please call IQT at 1-866-773-1114.



## ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH COSMETOLOGY SECTION

### COSMETOLOGY WRITTEN EXAMINATION INFORMATION

#### SCHEDULING PROCEDURES

The Arkansas Department of Health Cosmetology Section has contracted with PSI to provide examination services. The Department, through PSI, will exclusively use the National-Interstate Council of State Boards of Cosmetology (NIC) examinations.

You must apply with the Department to become eligible to take the examination.

To access the application, please contact the Department.

Arkansas Department of Health Cosmetology Section  
4815 West Markham, Slot 8  
Little Rock, AR 72205  
Telephone #: (501) 682-2168  
[www.arkansas.gov/cos/](http://www.arkansas.gov/cos/)

Once you have been approved by the Department, it is your responsibility to contact PSI to schedule for the examination.

<b>Examination Fee</b>	<b>\$60</b>
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- The fee is for each examination, whether you are taking the examination for the first time or repeating.
- Exam fees are paid directly to PSI; do not send exam fees to the Department.
- Exam fees are non-refundable, non-transferrable.
- Your eligibility will be valid for one year. If you fail, you may retest unlimited during the one year period.

#### INTERNET REGISTRATION

For the fastest and most convenient test scheduling process, PSI recommends that candidates register for their exams using the Internet. Candidates register online by accessing PSI's registration website at [www.psiexams.com](http://www.psiexams.com). Internet registration is available 24 hours a day. In order to register by Internet, complete the steps below:

1. Log onto PSI's website, select the link associated with the Arkansas examinations. Complete the associated registration form online and submit your information to PSI via the Internet.

2. Upon completion of the online registration form, you will be given the available exam dates and locations for scheduling your examination. Select your desired testing date and location.

#### TELEPHONE REGISTRATION

PSI registrars are available at (800) 733-9267, during business hours as follows:

	Monday-Friday	Saturday-Sunday
Eastern Time	7:30am - 10:00pm	9:00am - 5:30pm
Central Time	6:30am - 9:00pm	8:00am - 4:30pm
Mountain Time	5:30am - 8:00pm	7:00am - 3:30pm
Pacific Time	4:30am - 7:00pm	6:00am - 2:30pm

#### CANCELING AN EXAMINATION APPOINTMENT

You may cancel and reschedule an examination appointment without forfeiting your fee if your *cancellation notice is received 2 days before the scheduled examination date*. You may call PSI at (800) 733-9267 or fax a note to (702) 932-2666.

**Note:** A voice mail message is not an acceptable form of cancellation. Please use the PSI Website or call PSI and speak directly to a Customer Service Representative.

#### MISSED APPOINTMENT OR LATE CANCELLATION

Your registration will be invalid, you will not be able to take the examination as scheduled, and you will forfeit your examination fee, if you:

- Do not cancel your appointment 2 days before the schedule examination date;
- Do not appear for your examination appointment;
- Arrive after examination start time;
- Do not present proper identification when you arrive for the examination.

#### EXAM ACCOMMODATIONS

All examination centers are equipped to provide access in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, and exam accommodations will be made in meeting a candidate's needs. Applicants with disabilities or those who would otherwise have difficulty taking the examination must contact Arkansas Department of Health Cosmetology Section for approval.



## EXAMINATION SITE CLOSING FOR AN EMERGENCY

In the event that severe weather or another emergency forces the closure of an examination site on a scheduled examination date, your examination will be rescheduled. PSI personnel will attempt to contact you in this situation. However, you may check the status of your examination schedule by calling (800) 733-9267. Every effort will be made to reschedule your examination at a convenient time as soon as possible.

## COMPUTER EXAMINATION CENTER LOCATIONS

The licensing examinations are administered at the following PSI examination center.

### **Bentonville**

Summit Aviation  
2500 SW Aviation Street  
Bentonville, AR 72712  
*I-540 to exit 85. Take ramp right for US-71 BR/ AR-12 toward Rogers/Airport/Bentonville. Turn left onto US-71 / AR-12/W Walnut St. (Conoco on the corner). Keep right to stay on US-71. Turn left onto SW Airport Rd, bearing right onto SW Aviation Drive.*

### **Fayetteville**

Sky Venture Aviation Inc  
4500 S School Ave Suite C  
Fayetteville, AR 72701  
*Take I 540 S to US 71S via exit ramp. Exit 61. Merge onto US 71S toward going toward School Ave. At stop light merge Right onto S. School Ave (also US71B). Approximately 1.8 miles to Drake Field Airport. Turn Left into entrance. SkyVenture Aviation entrance is first entrance with double sliding glass doors.*

### **Harrison**

North Arkansas College  
1515 Pioneer Dr  
Harrison, AR 72601  
*Take I-65 to exit AR-123 then take the 1st right onto Pioneer Drive. The college will be on the right.*

### **Jonesboro**

SkyVenture Aviation of Arkansas Inc.  
3901 Lindbergh Drive Suite D  
Jonesboro, AR 72401  
*From the South: North on US 67, AR 14 to Jonesboro, Left on North US 40 and exit on Stadium Blvd. Go North on US 49, then right on Nettleton. Go left on Airport, then right on Lindbergh.*

### **North Little Rock**

Barrett Aviation, Inc.  
8318 Remount Road  
North Little Rock, Arkansas 72118  
*Take I40 East to North Little Rock. Take Levy Exit (#152). Go left under the overpass. Go Right at next lights. Go to 2nd light (Camp Robinson Road). Go Left on Camp Robinson Road. Go approx 3 mi and road will fork again onto Remount Road. Veer Right onto Remount. Go approx 1.5 mi to West entrance to NLR Airport. Turn Right into airport. Barrett Aviation is on the left at the end of drive.*

Additionally, PSI has examination centers in many other regions across the United States. You may take the written examination at any of these locations by calling (800) 733-9267. You will need to speak with a Customer Service Rep to schedule outside of the state.

## REPORTING TO THE EXAMINATION CENTER

On the day of the examination, you should arrive at least 30 minutes before your appointment. This extra time is for identification and familiarizing yourself with the examination process. **If you arrive late, you may not be admitted to the examination center and you will forfeit your registration fee.**

### REQUIRED IDENTIFICATION

- You must present one form of valid non-expired government issued identification with a photograph and your signature (i.e. driver's license, state identification card or passport) in order to be admitted to the examination room at PSI.

### SECURITY PROCEDURES

- Candidates may take only approved items into the examination room.
- All personal belongings of candidates, with the exception of close-fitting jackets or sweatshirts, should be placed in the secure storage provided at each site prior to entering the examination room. Personal belongings **include, but are not limited to**, the following items:
  - **Electronic devices of any type**(except those that are a medical necessity), including cellular / mobile phones, recording devices, electronic watches, cameras, pagers, laptop computers, tablet computers (e.g., iPads), music players (e.g., iPods), smart watches, radios, or electronic games.
  - **Bulky or loose clothing or coats** that could be used to conceal recording devices or notes, including coats, shawls, hooded clothing, heavy jackets, or overcoats.
  - **Hats or headgear not worn for religious reasons** or as religious apparel, including hats, baseball caps, or visors.
  - **Other personal items**, including purses, notebooks, reference or reading material, briefcases, backpacks, wallets, pens, pencils, other writing devices, food, drinks, and good luck items.
- Person(s) accompanying an examination candidate may not wait in the examination center, inside the building or on the building's property. This applies to guests of any nature, including drivers, children, friends, family, colleagues or instructors.
- No smoking, eating, or drinking is allowed in the examination center.
- During the check in process, all candidates will be asked if they possess any prohibited items. Candidates may also be asked to empty their pockets and turn them out for the proctor to ensure they are empty. The proctor may also ask candidates to lift up the ends of their sleeves



and the bottoms of their pant legs to ensure that notes or recording devices are not being hidden there.

- Proctors will also carefully inspect eyeglass frames, tie tacks, or any other apparel that could be used to harbor a recording device. Proctors will ask to inspect any such items in candidates' pockets.
- If prohibited items are found during check-in, candidates shall put them in the provided secure storage or return these items to their vehicle. PSI will not be responsible for the security of any personal belongings or prohibited items.
- Any candidate possessing prohibited items in the examination room shall immediately have his or her test results invalidated, and PSI shall notify the examination sponsor of the occurrence.
- Any candidate seen giving or receiving assistance on an examination, found with unauthorized materials, or who violates any security regulations will be asked to surrender all examination materials and to leave the examination center. All such instances will be reported to the examination sponsor.
- Copying or communicating examination content is violation of a candidate's contract with PSI, and federal and state law. Either may result in the disqualification of examination results and may lead to legal action.
- Once candidates have been seated and the examination begins, they may leave the examination room only to use the restroom, and only after obtaining permission from the proctor. Candidate will not receive extra time to complete the examination.



One question appears on the screen at a time. During the examination, minutes remaining will be displayed at the top of the screen and updated as you record your answers.

**IMPORTANT:** After you have entered your responses, you will later be able to return to any question(s) and change your response, provided the examination time has not run out.



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## **TAKING THE EXAMINATION BY COMPUTER**

### TAKING THE EXAMINATION BY COMPUTER

The examination will be administered via computer. You will be using a mouse and computer keyboard.

### IDENTIFICATION SCREEN

You will be directed to a semiprivate testing station to take the examination. When you are seated at the testing station, you will be prompted to confirm your name, identification number, and the examination for which you are registered.

### TUTORIAL

Before you start your examination, an introductory tutorial is provided on the computer screen. The time you spend on this tutorial, up to 15 minutes, DOES NOT count as part of your examination time. Sample questions are included following the tutorial so that you may practice answering questions, and reviewing your answers.

### TEST QUESTION SCREEN

The "function bar" at the top of the test question screen provides mouse-click access to the features available while taking the examination.

### PRETEST ITEMS

In addition to the number of examination items specified in the "Examination Content Outlines", a small number (5 to 10) of "pretest" questions may be administered to candidates during the examinations. These questions will not be scored and the time taken to answer them will not count against examination time. The administration of such unscored, experimental questions is an essential step in developing future licensing examinations.

### EXAMINATION REVIEW

The Arkansas Department of Health Cosmetology Section is utilizing the NIC examinations. NIC conducts ongoing analysis and review of their examinations to ensure the examinations accurately measure minimal competency in the required knowledge area.

## **SCORE REPORTING**

Your score will be given to you immediately following completion of the examination. This is an unofficial score report that will be printed at the examination site.

## **NATIONAL COSMETOLOGY WRITTEN EXAMINATION CONTENT OUTLINE AND REFERENCE MATERIAL**

The National Cosmetology examination is the national licensure examination for Cosmetology, which is developed and administered by the National-Interstate Council of State Boards of Cosmetology (NIC). For more information on the examination content outlines and references go to [www.nicesting.org](http://www.nicesting.org).



