

# Next Generation NCLEX® NEWS

## Next Generation NCLEX®: Successful Launch

The Next Generation NCLEX® News is a quarterly publication that has provided the latest information about the research being done to assess upcoming changes to the NCLEX® examinations. In this issue, you will find information related to the successful launch of the Next Generation NCLEX (NGN) in April 2023. Because of the successful launch of NGN, the National Council of State Boards of Nursing, Inc. (NCSBN®) is pleased to announce that this will be the final edition of the NGN News.

### Highlights

On April 1, 2023, NCSBN successfully launched the NGN examination, an enhancement of the world's premier licensure exam. Since the launch date, there have been more than 15,000 successful NGN exam deliveries across the world.

The NGN underwent thorough research and development for more than a decade to ensure every aspect of the updated exams meets the highest quality standards. In addition, NCSBN followed the leading standards in test development from the Institute for Credentialing Excellence, Association of Test Publishers, American Educational Research Association, American Psychological Association, National Council on Measurement in Education, Educational Testing Service and International Test Commission.

The launch of the updated NCLEX is the most significant change to the examination in more than 30 years. In 1994, the NCLEX was the first licensure examination to use computerized adaptive testing (CAT). This was a breakthrough in the professional licensure arena and resulted in several other examinations following suit. The new examination is now the first licensure examination to extend the CAT methodology to polytomously scored items, which allow for the assessment of partial credit of knowledge and skills. Polytomous scoring increases the precision of measurement and allows for better differentiation in candidates' understanding than simply placing their responses in "all correct" or "all incorrect" groupings for basic multiple-choice questions.



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The NCLEX has been fully updated to include a direct evaluation of entry-level clinical judgment skills. Clinical judgment is vital to the nursing profession and has grown in importance for entry-level practice over the past decade. It is believed that this skill will continue to grow in importance as health care evolves. The evaluation of clinical judgment is done using evolving case scenarios that measure each aspect of the NCSBN Clinical Judgment Measurement Model (NCJMM) (see Figure 1 below) as well as targeting standalone items measuring those same cognitive elements. Over the past six years, 127 item development panels were held to write and review all NGN items. This huge undertaking was only possible because of the incredible help of more than 600 expert nurse volunteers who contributed their time and effort as subject matter experts.

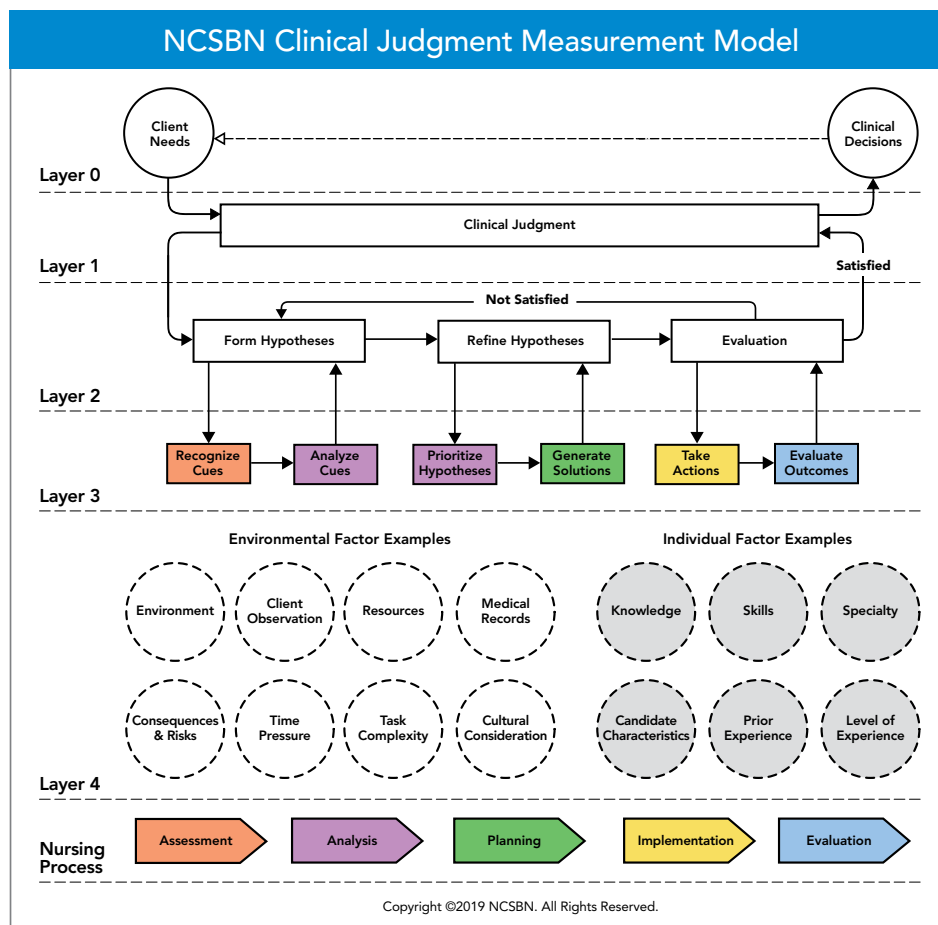


Figure 1. NCSBN Clinical Judgment Measurement Model.

The exam has also taken on a new look and feel that is more realistic to the work setting for entry-level nurses. New item types have been introduced that expand the potential for measuring important nursing knowledge, skills and abilities.

Evaluating the expanded array of items was only made possible by the 680,000-plus candidates who participated in the Special Research Section (SRS). The SRS began in July 2017 and continued until the release of the updated exam in April 2023. Without the dedication of so many entry-level nurses who took the time and effort to engage in the SRS and provide vital feedback, the NGN exam would not have been possible. The resulting research provided vital data for analysis and feedback for continued development.



The exam continues to use CAT methodology. This approach enables an evaluation tailored to each candidate's ability level. Tailoring the exam this way allows for each candidate to receive items of the appropriate difficulty level rather than items that are too easy or too hard. Whether low or high ability, each candidate is challenged with items at their ability level. Candidates do not see items for evolving scenarios that are too difficult or too easy for them. This ensures that the updated exam continues to function as it always has since the implementation of the CAT methodology almost 30 years ago.

In addition to research and development work that was the foundation for the updated exam, NCSBN also conducted extensive outreach to keep stakeholders updated as we approached the April 2023 go-live date. To accomplish this, NCSBN gave 143 presentations across multiple professional groups. There was outreach to all important stakeholders, from leading regulators and educators in the U.S. and Canada to publishers that provide preparatory resources for students. More than 60 presentations pertaining to the research results were given at professional conferences. These presentations allowed NCSBN to reach more than 22,000 attendees from

2018 to 2022. From these interactions, NCSBN received feedback that was used to enhance the work needed to achieve success and to provide continual updates on progress.

## Summary

After a decade of research and development, the next generation of the NCLEX is now live. The major enhancements are the direct measurement of entry-level clinical judgment through the use of evolving case studies; an expanded array of item types to increase the measurement capabilities of all aspects of entry-level nursing knowledge, skills, and abilities; and the use of polytomous CAT that allows for partial credit scoring.

For more information, please see the [NCLEX website](#) for links to relevant news and videos. The NGN newsletters are a repository of information regarding the new item types, polytomous scoring, test design, and more related to the updated exam features. The site also provides resources for preparing to take the NGN, such as the candidate tutorial that allows for unlimited interaction with the item types used in the exam, practice items and case studies to review, the candidate bulletin, and a number of other publications.



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