



COLLEGE OF NURSES
OF ONTARIO
ORDRE DES INFIRMIÈRES
ET INFIRMIERS DE L'ONTARIO

THE STANDARD OF CARE.

Fact Sheet 1: General Information

Regulatory Exam –

Practical Nurse

Click below to find out more

About

The Regulatory Exam – Practical Nurse (REx-PN) is an entry-to-practice exam for those applying to become a Registered Practical Nurse (RPN) in Ontario. It will test for the knowledge, skills and judgment RPNs need at the beginning of their careers.

Purpose

Registration exams such as the REx-PN contribute to patient safety. Regulators of the nursing profession are accountable for ensuring that only those who demonstrate the ability to apply nursing knowledge and provide safe care at the beginning of their careers are able to practice in Ontario. The registration exam helps to do this.



IMPLEMENTED
Jan. 4, 2022

Exam Content

Focus: Testing entry-level competencies

At the beginning of your careers as an RPN, you will need to have certain competencies — knowledge, skills and judgment — in order to provide safe care. These competencies are covered in your nursing program's curriculum. The [REx-PN Test Plan](#) describes what will be tested and the types of questions on the exam, as well as providing some sample questions.



KNOWLEDGE



SKILLS



JUDGMENT



REx-PN will **not** test...

- x** Knowledge of health care systems
- x** History
- x** Government policy and laws*

* While nurses must know about the health care system they work in, including its legislation, testing for that knowledge is not the purpose of the REx-PN. Applicants to CNO write a **Jurisprudence Exam** that tests for this knowledge.

Exam Format

The REx-PN is designed to measure whether you have the ability level needed to provide safe care when you start as a nurse. The exam uses a **Computerized Adaptive Testing** (CAT) format which adapts questions to your ability level as you proceed through the exam. For example, if you respond correctly to a question of medium difficulty, the next question you get will be slightly more difficult. Because of how a CAT works, you cannot skip a question or go back to change an answer. This video provides you with more information about the CAT format of the REx-PN.



Questions

90-150 Total questions

– 30 Will not count*
Being pre-tested for possible inclusion on future exams

60-120 Will count



Time to complete



Available to write in
French or English

* Pre-testing is required to ensure CAT exams function properly. By administering pre-test items to a large sample of REx-PN writers, the degree of difficulty of each question can be determined. You will not be able to distinguish between an unscored pretest question and a scored question on the REx-PN, so you should give each question your best effort. [Click here](#) to learn more about the rigour behind the exam's development.

Types of questions

A variety of question types are used on the REx-PN. You could see:

- **Multiple choice:** you will need to select a single response.
- **Multiple response:** you will need to select multiple responses, or all responses as correct to answer the question.
- **Fill-in-the-blank calculation:** you will need to calculate an answer using numbers, and may make use of the integrated calculator if needed.
- **Exhibit:** you will be presented with a problem and will need to review the exhibit to select an answer.
- **Graphics:** images are used as part of the stem or as options.

Examples of each question type will be found in the “look and feel” practice exams that will be available in French and English in summer 2021.

Passing

How a pass is determined

The exam's goal is to get as much information as possible about your true ability level. With each item you answer, the computer's estimate of your ability becomes more precise. You must achieve a certain ability level — known as the **passing standard** — on the exam to pass.

The REx-PN Exam Committee recommends the standard as the minimum level of ability required for safe and effective entry-level nursing practice. Once the passing standard is set, it is imposed uniformly on every exam. There is no fixed percentage of candidates that pass or fail each examination.

The REx-PN is determining if you meet the ability level needed to practice safely in your first year of nursing as an RPN. For that reason, you either meet that ability and pass, or you do not and will be able to retake the exam again on a future date. For this reason, you will not get a "mark" for the exam.

Number of writes

A benefit of a CAT exam is that it allows there to be no limits on the number of times you can write it in order to pass. There can be no limits because you will get a completely new set of questions when you retake the exam, so each retake is newly assessing your true ability. However, you will also need to continue to meet all other requirements to become registered to practice as a nurse in Ontario. Also, you will have to wait 60 days before you can write the exam again.

If you are not successful, the exam provider Pearson VUE will send you a Candidate Performance Report (CPR). This document will provide information about how you did in each section of the exam, indicating whether you performed above, near or below the passing standard.



**No limits on number
of writes**

60

**Number of days
between exam writes**

Resources

Click below to find out more

Coming soon

Fact Sheet 2: Preparing for the REx-PN (Available Summer 2021)

Learn more about how to prepare to write the REx-PN and gain access to additional prep material currently being developed, including: a “look and feel” practice exam; a REx-PN Tutorial explaining how to answer each of the types of questions; and a Candidate Bulletin with full details on the exam.

Fact Sheet 3: Writing the REx-PN (Available Autumn 2021)

Learn about applying to CNO, registering to write the REx-PN, scheduling an exam date, and brief details on what to expect before and after the exam.