



# NATIONAL HAIR DESIGN PRACTICAL EXAMINATION

## CANDIDATE INFORMATION BULLETIN

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This bulletin contains important information regarding the NIC National Hair Design Practical Examination content and administration. 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.
- Candidates are required to bring their own kit with sufficient quantity of supplies in sanitary condition. This includes the required implements in proper working order, and protective drapes. The kit must be kept closed except when removing or replacing materials for a particular service. The kit will be used during the examination as dry storage and is considered part of the work area.
- All examinations are administered in a testing environment. Candidates should bring a container of water if needed for any section of the examination. Candidates may bring a thermos of hot water if desired. All water and their containers must be taken with the candidates and may not be disposed of at the testing facility.
- Candidates are evaluated at all times. Continue demonstrating until you have completed the entire section.
- Candidates will be given 10 minutes for client protection and to set up the general supplies that they will use throughout the examination.
- Candidates will also be given 2 minutes to set up the supplies for each section of the examination.
- The verbal instructions will be read twice for each section of the examination. Each examination section has a maximum time allowance. Once you have completed all tasks in the section please step back to indicate that you are finished. In the event that all candidates complete the section before the time has elapsed the examiners will proceed to the next section of the examination.
- Candidates must follow all appropriate public protection and infection control procedures during all phases of the practical examination that will ensure the health, safety, and welfare of the public. In the event of a blood spill candidates will be expected to follow the NIC Health and Safety Standards. Failure to do so may result in your dismissal from the examination.
- Talking with other candidates or the examiners during the examination is strictly prohibited. Doing so will result in your dismissal from the examination and a report of your actions to the proper authorities. Your examiner has been instructed not to answer any questions concerning your examination. This ensures equal opportunity for all candidates and standardization in testing for the National Practical Examination. If you have an emergency situation please ask to speak with the examination coordinator.
- Chemicals for Chemical Waving, Hair Lightening, Hair Coloring, and Chemical Relaxing will be simulated.
- Manufacturer's labels are required on all disinfectants and sanitizers.

### MODEL OR MANNEQUIN(S)

Depending on the state, candidates will either use a live model or mannequin head(s) and/or a mannequin hand(s) for the examination.

*\* Please refer to State guidelines.*

#### **\*If your state permits a live model:**

Models must be at least 15 years of age and cannot be licensed or a student studying in this field. Models must be present with the candidate at the beginning of the practical examination. The model must present a valid driver's license or State ID card for admittance to the examination. The model must be appropriate for examination purposes. The model must agree to submit to all services in the practical examination. Models may not participate in any way during the examination. Models are not permitted to talk to the candidate or examiners at any time during the examination.

#### **\*If your state permits a mannequin head(s):**

If you are required to bring a mannequin head(s), it is the candidate's responsibility to appear at the practical examination with their mannequin head(s).

**Mannequin heads that have been purchased presectioned indicating the sections by various colors and/or notches are NOT allowed during any part of the practical examination.**

**HAIR DESIGN PRACTICAL  
EXAMINATION CONTENT SECTIONS**

The scope of the National Hair Design Practical Examination includes six (6) core domain services. The core domain services are based on the national job analysis. The core domain services are as follows:

**Core Domain Services**

- Set Up and Client Protection
- Thermal Curling
- Haircutting
- Chemical Waving
- Hair Lightening and Hair Coloring
- Chemical Relaxing

**SET UP AND CLIENT PROTECTION  
(10 minutes)**

**Verbal Instructions:**

*"You will now set up the general supplies that you will use throughout your examination."*  
*"You will also set up the supplies for the thermal curling section of this examination."*  
*"You will perform the client protection section of this examination."*  
*"You will be expected to follow all safety and infection control procedures."*  
*"You will have 10 minutes to complete this section."*  
*"You will be informed when you have 5 minutes remaining."*  
**(1)** *"The instructions will be repeated."* **(2)** *"You may begin."*

**Candidates will be evaluated on the following tasks:**

**Preparation**

- Sanitizes hands
- Disinfects work area or uses protective covering
- Sets up work area with supplies labeled in English
- Disposes of soiled materials using infection control procedures
- Uses a neck strip or towel
- Applies drape
- Re-sanitizes hands

**THERMAL CURLING  
(10 minutes)**

**Verbal Instructions:**

*"You will now perform the thermal curling section of this examination."*  
*"You will form at least three thermal curls in the top section of the head."*  
*"You will also form two parallel rows of curls in the side section of the head with at least two thermal curls in each row."*  
*"You will be expected to follow all safety and infection control procedures."*  
*"You will have 10 minutes to complete this section."*  
*"You will be informed when you have 5 minutes remaining."*  
**(1)** *"The instructions will be repeated."* **(2)** *"You may begin."*

**Candidates will be evaluated on the following tasks:**

**Preparation**

- Sets up implements that are visibly clean and sanitary
- Tests temperature of iron prior to applying to hair

**Demonstration of Thermal Curling**

- Subsections hair same width as barrel of iron
- Subsections hair no longer than 3 inches
- Establishes a base
- Distributes hair evenly around iron
- Forms a complete curl
- Protects scalp from iron with comb
- Forms curls so that hair is smooth and unmarked

**Safety and Infection Control**

- Uses iron safely at all times
- Maintains neck strip or towel and drape for protection throughout service
- Practices infection control procedures safely throughout service
- Maintains work area in a safe manner throughout service

**HAIRCUTTING**  
(30 minutes)

**Verbal Instructions for Set Up:**

*"You have 2 minutes to remove the supplies from your kit, wet the hair, and brush it straight back for the haircutting section of this examination. Please do not begin any procedures until the verbal instructions have been read and you are instructed to begin. You may begin set up."*

**Verbal Instructions:**

*"You will now perform the haircutting section of this examination."  
 "You will complete a basic layered haircut using shears and a razor."  
 "You must remove at least one inch of hair throughout the haircut."  
 "You will use your razor to cut the nape section of the hair from the top of the ears to the hairline."  
 "You will complete the remainder of the haircut using the shears."  
 "Please do not sweep the hair from the floor until you are instructed."  
 "You will be expected to follow all safety and infection control procedures."  
 "You will have 30 minutes to complete this section."  
 "You will be informed when you have 15 minutes remaining."  
 (1) "The instructions will be repeated." (2) "You may begin."*

**Candidates will be evaluated on the following tasks:**

**Preparation**

- Sets up implements that are visibly clean and sanitary

**Demonstration of Haircutting**

- Uses razor to establish nape guide
- Cuts entire nape section with elevation using razor
- Handles razor safely at all times
- Uses consistent subsections/partings while cutting hair
- Uses established guides
- Handles shears safely at all times

**Examiners will read the following to each candidate after candidate has stepped back to indicate that they have completed their haircut or the timing has elapsed:**

*"May I please use your comb to check your haircut?"*

- Cuts nape line to a uniform length
- Cuts sides uniform in length
- Blends haircut evenly
- Cuts at least one inch of hair throughout haircut

**Safety and Infection Control**

- Removes hair clippings from skin, cape, and work area

**Examiners will read the following to each candidate after checking their haircut:**

*"You may clean up only your hair at this time."*

- Sweeps hair from floor
- Maintains neck strip or towel and drape for protection throughout service
- Practices infection control procedures safely throughout service
- Maintains work area in a safe manner throughout service

**CHEMICAL WAVING**  
(20 minutes)

**Verbal Instructions for Set Up:**

*"You have 2 minutes to remove the supplies from your kit for the chemical waving section of this examination. Please do not begin any procedures until the verbal instructions have been read and you are instructed to begin. You may begin set up."*

**Verbal Instructions:**

*"You will now perform the chemical waving section of this examination."  
 "You will wrap the center back section of the head, from crown to nape."  
 "You will demonstrate a wrap to form a full curl."  
 "You will be instructed to apply simulated waving lotion by your examiner."  
 "You will be instructed to demonstrate a test curl by your examiner."  
 "You will be expected to follow all safety and infection control procedures."  
 "You will have 20 minutes to complete this section."  
 "You will be informed when you have 10 minutes remaining."  
 (1) "The instructions will be repeated." (2) "You may begin."*

**Candidates will be evaluated on the following tasks:**

**Preparation**

- Sets up implements that are visibly clean and sanitary
- Sets up work area with supplies labeled in English

**Demonstration of Chemical Waving**

- Subsections hair straight and evenly
- Subsections hair no longer than length of rod
- Subsections hair same width as rod
- Wraps hair evenly and smoothly around rod
- Distributes hair evenly across end paper
- Extends end papers beyond hair ends
- Places bands correctly
- Uses same rod base placement throughout section
- Wraps hair around rod at least 1½ times

**Examiners will read the following to each candidate:**

*"Please demonstrate saturation."*

- Applies cotton and/or protective cream at nape
- Wears gloves during application of simulated product
- Applies simulated product across entire rod safely

**Examiners will read the following to each candidate:**

*"Please demonstrate a test curl."*

- Unwraps rod at least 1½ turns and hair is held to relax

**Safety and Infection Control**

- Maintains neck strip or towel and drape for protection throughout service
- Practices infection control procedures safely throughout service
- Maintains work area in a safe manner throughout service

**Please read the following to the entire group of candidates when the timer goes off:** *"Please stop the chemical waving procedure. Do not remove the perm rods until the examiner instructs you to remove them."*

**Please read the following to the entire group of candidates after examiners have finished checking all candidates:**

*"Please remove all rods from the head and brush the hair straight back."*

**HAIR LIGHTENING AND HAIR COLORING**  
(20 minutes)

**Verbal Instructions for Set Up:**

*"You have 2 minutes to remove the supplies from your kit for the hair lightening and hair coloring section of this examination. Please do not begin any procedures until the verbal instructions have been read and you are instructed to begin. You may begin set up."*

**Verbal Instructions:**

*"You will now perform the hair lightening and hair coloring section of this examination."*

*"You will divide the head into four equal sections."*

*"You will apply a virgin lightener to section # 1, the right front section of the head."*

*"You will apply a 2 inch hair coloring retouch to section # 2, the right back section of the head."*

*"You may use either a bottle or a brush application."*

*"You will be expected to follow all safety and infection control procedures."*

*"You will have 20 minutes to complete this section."*

*"You will be informed when you have 10 minutes remaining."*

**(1)** *"The instructions will be repeated."* **(2)** *"You may begin."*

**Candidates will be evaluated on the following tasks:**

**Preparation**

- Sets up implements that are visibly clean and sanitary
- Sets up work area with supplies labeled in English
- Divides head into four equal sections
- Applies protective cream around hairline
- Wears gloves during application of simulated lightener and hair color products

**Demonstration of Virgin Hair Lightening Application**

- Subsections hair 1/8 inch wide or less
- Applies simulated product 1/2 inch from scalp
- Applies simulated product up to but not including last 1 inch of hair
- Completely covers subsections with simulated product

**Demonstration of Retouch Hair Coloring Application**

- Outlines hair color retouch quadrant with simulated product
- Subsections hair 1/2 inch wide or less
- Applies simulated product from scalp up to 2 inches
- Completely covers subsections with simulated product

**Safety and Infection Control**

- Keeps skin free of product
- Maintains neck strip or towel and drape for protection throughout service
- Practices infection control procedures safely throughout service
- Maintains work area in a safe manner throughout service

**CHEMICAL RELAXING**  
(25 minutes)

**Verbal Instructions for Set Up:**

*"You have 2 minutes to remove the supplies from your kit for the chemical relaxing section of this examination. Please do not begin any procedures until the verbal instructions have been read and you are instructed to begin. You may begin set up."*

**Verbal Instructions:**

*"You will now perform the chemical relaxing section of this examination."*

*"You will apply a virgin relaxer application to section #3, the left back section of the head."*

*"You will apply a 2 inch relaxer retouch application on section #4, the left front section of the head."*

*"You may use either a bottle or a brush application."*

*"You will be instructed to demonstrate smoothing the relaxer retouch product by your examiner."*

*"You will be expected to follow all safety and infection control procedures."*

*"You will have 25 minutes to complete this section."*

*"You will be informed when you have 13 minutes remaining."*

**(1)** *"The instructions will be repeated."* **(2)** *"You may begin."*

**Candidates will be evaluated on the following tasks:**

**Preparation**

- Sets up implements that are visibly clean and sanitary
- Sets up work area with supplies labeled in English
- Applies protective cream around hairline

**Demonstration of Virgin Relaxer Application**

- Wears gloves during application of simulated relaxer product
- Subsections hair 1/4 inch wide or less
- Applies simulated product 1/2 inch from scalp
- Applies simulated product up to but not including last 1 inch of hair
- Completely covers subsections with simulated product

**Demonstration of Relaxer Retouch Application**

- Outlines relaxer retouch quadrant with simulated product
- Subsections hair 1/4 inch wide or less
- Applies simulated product starting slightly off scalp, up to 1/4 inch from scalp, and out to 2 inches
- Completely covers subsections with simulated product

**Examiners will read the following to each candidate:**

*"Please demonstrate smoothing the relaxer retouch product."*

- Demonstrates smoothing of subsection in direction of hair growth and cuticle with moderate tension

**Safety and Infection Control**

- Keeps skin free of product
- Maintains neck strip or towel and drape for protection throughout service
- Practices infection control procedures safely throughout service
- Maintains work area in a safe manner throughout service

**CANDIDATE SUMMARY  
AND FINAL CLEANUP**

**Verbal Instructions:**

*“This concludes the National Practical Examination. Please make sure that all kit supplies and disposable materials are taken with you. Please do not dispose of waste materials, chemicals, or water in the trash receptacles or restrooms as they are unable to accommodate all waste materials from every candidate that takes the examination.”*

**RECOMMENDED GENERAL SUPPLIES**

**ALL SUPPLIES MUST BE LABELED IN ENGLISH**

*\* Please refer to State guidelines*

- dry storage kit/container\*
- hand sanitizer
- mannequin head(s) and a table clamp\* (pre-marked mannequins are **NOT** permitted)
- a towel to place between the clamp and the table\*
- spray disinfectant\*
- disposal bag for waste materials
- cloth and paper towel(s)
- neck strip(s)
- shampoo cape (child size is appropriate for mannequin)
- hair clamp(s)
- comb(s)
- hair brush(es)
- spray bottle
- protective cream
- spatula(s)
- protective cotton
- protective gloves
- first aid supplies (blood spill kit)
- tape

**THERMAL CURLING SUPPLIES**

- thermal curling iron
- comb(s)
- material for testing temperature of iron

**HAIRCUTTING SUPPLIES**

- haircutting shears
- razor
- comb(s)

**CHEMICAL WAVING SUPPLIES**

- chemical wave rods
- end papers
- applicator bottle with simulated waving lotion (water)
- comb(s)

**HAIR LIGHTENING AND HAIR COLORING  
SUPPLIES**

*\* Please refer to State guidelines*

- tint brush and bowl or bottle applicator
- thick gel or colored cholesterol\*
- comb(s)
- hair clips

**CHEMICAL RELAXING SUPPLIES**

*\* Please refer to State guidelines*

- tint brush and bowl or bottle applicator
- thick gel or colored cholesterol\*
- comb(s)

**HAIR DESIGN REFERENCES**

*Milady’s Standard Cosmetology, 2008*

Milady  
5 Maxwell Drive  
Clifton Park, NY 12065  
(800) 347-7707  
[www.Milady.com](http://www.Milady.com)

*Salon Fundamentals, Cosmetology, 2005*

Pivot Point International, Inc.  
Evanston, IL 60201  
(800) 886-4247  
[www.pivot-point.com](http://www.pivot-point.com)

NIC Health and Safety Standards

NIC, Inc., October 2002  
[www.nicesting.org](http://www.nicesting.org)

**OPTIONAL REFERENCES**

*Milady’s Standard Cosmetology, 2004*

Milady  
5 Maxwell Drive  
Clifton Park, NY 12065  
(800) 347-7707  
[www.Milady.com](http://www.Milady.com)

*Salon Fundamentals Cosmetology, 2004 & 2006*

Pivot Point International, Inc.  
Evanston, IL 60201  
(800) 886-4247  
[www.pivot-point.com](http://www.pivot-point.com)

## NIC HEALTH AND SAFETY STANDARDS BLOOD SPILL PROCEDURE

If a blood spill should occur, the following steps **MUST** be followed:

- **SUPPLY INJURED PARTY WITH LIQUID STYPTIC/ANTISEPTIC AND THE APPROPRIATE DRESSING TO COVER THE INJURY.**
- **DOUBLE BAG ALL BLOOD-SOILED (CONTAMINATED) ARTICLES AND LABEL WITH RED OR ORANGE BIOHAZARD WARNING.** This is the responsibility of the candidate and should be executed as follows:

### CANDIDATE INJURY – FOR EXAMINATION PURPOSES

1. **PROTECTION** – If a cut is sustained, stop the service and clean the injured area.
2. **APPLY** antiseptic and/or liquid or spray styptic as appropriate (see NOTE).
3. **DRESSING** - cover the injury with the appropriate dressing.
4. **COVER** injured area with finger guard or glove as appropriate.
5. **CLEAN** model/client and station as appropriate.
6. **DOUBLE BAG** and dispose of all contaminated objects. Clean hands with antimicrobial cleanser.
7. **RETURN** to service.

### MODEL INJURY – FOR EXAMINATION PURPOSES

1. **STOP** service.
2. **GLOVE** hands of candidate/student/licensee.
3. **CLEAN** injured area as appropriate.
4. **APPLY** antiseptic and/or liquid or spray styptic as appropriate (see NOTE).
5. **COVER** the injury with the appropriate dressing to prevent further blood exposure.
6. **DOUBLE BAG** and dispose of all contaminated objects. Clean hands with antimicrobial cleanser.
7. **RETURN** to service.

### EXAMINERS:

- **EXAMINER IS TO USE UNUSED DISPOSABLE LATEX GLOVES OR NON-ALLERGENIC EQUIVALENT WHEN CHECKING THAT CANDIDATE’S SERVICE. DOUBLE BAG AND DISPOSE USED GLOVES.**
- **FOLLOW WITH ANTIMICROBIAL SCRUB ON HANDS.**
- **DOCUMENT INCIDENT IN BLOOD SPILL LOG.**

**NOTE: DO NOT ALLOW CONTAINERS, BRUSHES, NOZZLES OR LIQUID STYPTIC TO TOUCH THE SKIN OR CONTACT THE WOUND. USE AN APPLICATOR. EXAMINERS SHOULD ALSO COMPLETE AN INCIDENT REPORT.**

## WET DISINFECTION STANDARD

- 1** All tools and implements, **EXCEPT THOSE THAT HAVE COME IN CONTACT WITH BLOOD OR BODY FLUIDS** must be disinfected, at minimum, by complete immersion in an EPA registered, *bactericidal, virucidal, fungicidal, and pseudomonacidal (Formulated for Hospitals)* disinfectant that is mixed and used according to the manufacturer’s directions.
- 2** All tools and implements **WHICH HAVE COME IN CONTACT WITH BLOOD OR BODY FLUIDS** must be disinfected, at minimum, by complete immersion in an EPA registered disinfectant that is effective *against HIV-1 and human Hepatitis B Virus or Tuberculocidal* that is mixed and used according to the manufacturer’s directions.

## DRY STORAGE STANDARD

Disinfected implements must be stored in a disinfected, dry, covered container and be isolated from contaminants.

## HAND WASHING

(Anti-Bacterial Soap is recommended)

Thoroughly wash hands and the exposed portions of arms with antibacterial soap and water before providing services to **each client** and after smoking, drinking, eating, and using the restroom.

## NAIL TECHNOLOGY

### Practical Examinations

Liquid Monomer containing *Methyl Methacrylate (MMA)* is **prohibited** for use during NIC practical examinations. Odorless sculpture nail products **are required** for use during NIC practical examinations.

Adopted as amended October 2002

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