



NATIONAL COSMETOLOGY  
WRITTEN EXAMINATION

CANDIDATE INFORMATION BULLETIN

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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). This Candidate Information Bulletin includes the content outline covered by the NIC National Cosmetology examination, sample questions and answers. The time allowed for the Cosmetology written examination is 90 minutes.

**SCIENTIFIC  
CONCEPTS  
29%**

**Infection Control**

- ◇ Microbiology
  - Bacteria
  - Viruses
  - Parasites
  - Immunity
  - Prevention
- ◇ Methods of infection control
  - Sanitation
  - Disinfection
  - Sterilization
- ◇ Federal regulations
- ◇ Universal precautions

**Human Anatomy and Physiology**

- ◇ Cells
- ◇ Tissues
- ◇ Body systems
  - Skeletal system
  - Muscular system
  - Circulatory system

**Nutrition**

**Ergonomics**

**Basic Principles of Chemistry**

- ◇ Compounds, mixtures, solutions, suspensions, and emulsions
- ◇ The pH scale
- ◇ Product ingredients
- ◇ Chemical reactions

**Basic Principles of Electricity**

- ◇ Electric current
  - Direct current
  - Alternating current
- ◇ Electric measurements
- ◇ Electricity in cosmetology
  - Electrotherapy
  - Light therapy
  - Safety precautions

**HAIR CARE AND SERVICES  
51%**

**Trichology**

- ◇ Properties and structure of hair and scalp
  - Shaft
  - Root
- ◇ Hair analysis and hair quality
  - Porosity
  - Texture
  - Elasticity
  - Density
- ◇ Hair growth
  - Anagen
  - Catagen
  - Telogen
- ◇ Hair loss (alopecia)
  - Types of alopecia
  - Hair loss treatments
- ◇ Disorders of the scalp
  - Dandruff
  - Tinea
  - Scabies
  - Pediculosis capitis

**Principles of Hair Design**

- ◇ Elements of hair design
  - Form
  - Space
  - Line
  - Color
  - Wave pattern/texture
- ◇ Principles of hair design
  - Proportion
  - Balance
  - Rhythm
  - Emphasis/contrast
  - Harmony
- ◇ Facial shapes

**Draping Procedures**

- ◇ Wet services
- ◇ Dry services
- ◇ Chemical services

**Brushing, Shampooing, Conditioning, Hair, and Scalp Treatment Procedures**

- ◇ Brushing the hair
- ◇ Shampooing
  - Types of shampoos
  - Selection
  - Procedure
- ◇ Conditioning
  - Types of conditioners
  - Selection
  - Procedure
- ◇ Hair and scalp treatments
- ◇ Safety precautions

**Haircutting Procedures**

- ◇ Basic principles of haircutting
  - Areas of the head
  - Elevation
  - Lines and angles
  - Crosschecking
  - Texturizing
- ◇ Client consultation
  - Desired look
  - Face, head, and body shape
  - Hair analysis
  - Lifestyle
- ◇ Tools
  - Shears
  - Texturizing/thinning/taper shears
  - Razor
  - Clippers and trimmers
  - Combs

**Basic haircuts**

- Blunt
- Graduated
- Uniformly-layered

**Safety precautions**

**Hairstyling Procedures**

- ◇ Client consultation
- ◇ Wet styling
  - Tools
  - Finger waving
  - Pin curls
  - Roller curls
- ◇ Long hair styling

- ◇ Thermal styling
  - Blow-drying
  - Curling irons
  - Pressing irons
- ◇ Safety precautions

**Braiding, Wigs, and Hair Enhancements/Additions**

- ◇ Client consultation
- ◇ Braiding
- ◇ Hair extensions/additions
- ◇ Wigs
- ◇ Hairpieces
- ◇ Safety precautions

**Chemical Texture Services**

- ◇ Client consultation
- ◇ Permanent waving
  - Types of permanent waves
  - Permanent waving procedures
- ◇ Chemical hair relaxers
  - Types of chemical hair relaxers
  - Chemical hair relaxing procedures
- ◇ Soft curl permanent or curl reforming
  - Selection of soft curl permanent product
  - Soft curl permanent procedures
- ◇ Safety precautions

**Hair Coloring Procedures**

- ◇ Color theory
- ◇ Client consultation
- ◇ Types of hair color
- ◇ Color selection
- ◇ Hair color applications
- ◇ Hair lightening
- ◇ Special effects hair coloring
- ◇ Hair color problems and corrections
- ◇ Safety precautions

**SKIN CARE AND SERVICES**  
11%

**Skin Histology**

- ◇ Anatomy of skin
  - Layers of the skin
  - Nerves of the skin
  - Glands of the skin
  - Types of skin
  - Skin color
  - Aging of the skin
- ◇ Disorders of the skin
- ◇ Functions of the skin

**Draping Procedures**

**Hair Removal Procedures**

- ◇ Client consultation
- ◇ Temporary hair removal
  - Tweezing
  - Waxing
  - Depilatories
- ◇ Safety precautions
- ◇ Infection control

**Facial Procedures**

- ◇ Client consultation
- ◇ Skin care tools and work area
  - Equipment
  - Supplies
- ◇ Facial massage
  - Effleurage
  - Petrissage
  - Friction
  - Tapotement
  - Vibration
- ◇ Facial treatments
  - Masks
  - Extractions
  - Exfoliations
- ◇ Safety precautions
- ◇ Infection control

**Facial Makeup Application**

- ◇ Client consultation
- ◇ Cosmetics for facial makeup
- ◇ Makeup color theory
- ◇ Corrective theory
- ◇ Safety precautions
- ◇ Infection control

**NAIL CARE AND SERVICES**  
9%

**Nail Structure and Growth**

- ◇ Nail growth
- ◇ Nail disorders/diseases

**Manicure and Pedicure Procedures**

- ◇ Client consultation
- ◇ Nail care tools and work area
  - Equipment
  - Supplies
- ◇ Types of hand and foot massage
- ◇ Types of manicures
  - Basic
  - Specialty
- ◇ Types of pedicures
  - Basic
  - Specialty
- ◇ Safety precautions
- ◇ Infection control

**Advanced Nail Procedures**

- ◇ Pre-service and post-service
- ◇ Artificial nail services
- ◇ Safety precautions
- ◇ Infection control

**SAMPLE QUESTIONS**

The following sample questions are similar to those on the NIC Cosmetology Written Examination. Each question is followed by four answer choices. Only one choice is correct. Correct answers are listed following the sample questions.

1. Which of the following substances is usually contained in a toner?
  - a. Metallic dye
  - b. Compound dye
  - c. Vegetable tint
  - d. Oxidation tint
2. Which one of the following should be applied to the skin after removal of whiteheads?
  - a. A caustic
  - b. Deodorant
  - c. An antiseptic
  - d. Bleaching cream
3. Before disinfecting combs and brushes, they should be
  - a. wiped with a towel.
  - b. wiped with a tissue.
  - c. rinsed in cold water.
  - d. cleaned with soap and warm water.

4. What is the process used in tapering and thinning with scissors?
  - a. Clipping
  - b. Slithering
  - c. Razor cutting
  - d. Layer cutting
5. The action of chemical hair relaxers causes the hair to
  - a. stop growing.
  - b. harden and set.
  - c. form new curls.
  - d. soften and swell.
6. When should a predisposition test be performed?
  - a. When the scalp has cuts
  - b. Before applying peroxide
  - c. Before every application of oxidizing tints
  - d. Before any application of vegetable coloring

7. At what part of the nail does growth start?
  - a. Wall
  - b. Matrix
  - c. Lunula
  - d. Cuticle
8. What is the function of sebum?
  - a. To dry the skin
  - b. To harden the skin
  - c. To cleanse the skin
  - d. To lubricate the skin
9. Sterilization is the process of
  - a. keeping bacteria alive.
  - b. destroying offensive odors.
  - c. destroying beneficial microorganisms only.
  - d. destroying both harmful and beneficial bacteria.
10. Where should freshly laundered towels be kept?
  - a. On a clean shelf
  - b. In any convenient place
  - c. In a closed cabinet or drawer
  - e. In neat stacks by the shampoo bowl

**Answers**

1. d   4. b   7. b   10. c  
2. c   5. d   8. d  
3. d   6. c   9. d

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**COSMETOLOGY REFERENCES**

*Milady's Standard Cosmetology, 2007*

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*

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

*Milady's Standard Nail Technology, 2007*

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