



NATIONAL HAIR DESIGN  
WRITTEN EXAMINATION

CANDIDATE INFORMATION BULLETIN

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The National Hair Design examination is the national licensure examination for Hair Designers, 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 Hair Design examination, sample questions, and answers. The time allowed for the Hair Design written examination is 90 minutes.

**SCIENTIFIC  
CONCEPTS**  
33%

**HAIR CARE AND  
SERVICES**  
67%

**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
- ◇ 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 and infection control

**Hair and Scalp**

- ◇ Shaft
  - Cuticle
  - Cortex
  - Medulla
- ◇ Root
  - Follicle
  - Bulb
  - Papilla
  - Arrector pili muscle
  - Sebaceous gland
- ◇ 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 (repetition, alternation, and/or progression)
  - 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 and infection control

**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 and infection control

**Hair Styling 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 and infection control

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

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

**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 and infection control

**Hair Coloring Procedures**

- ◇ Color theory
- ◇ Client consultation
- ◇ Types of haircolor
- ◇ Color selection
- ◇ Haircolor applications
- ◇ Hair lightening
- ◇ Special effects haircoloring
- ◇ Haircolor problems and corrections
- ◇ Safety precautions and infection control

**SAMPLE QUESTIONS**

The following questions are similar to those on the National Hair Design 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. The main purpose of scalp treatments is to
  - a. cure scalp disease.
  - b. make the hair more dry.
  - c. make the hair more oily.
  - d. maintain the health of the scalp and hair.
3. Action of lightener continues only as long as it remains
  - a. dry.
  - b. soft.
  - c. moist.
  - d. powdery.
4. 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.
5. What is the process used in tapering and thinning with scissors?
  - a. Clipping
  - b. Slithering
  - c. Razor cutting
  - d. Layer cutting

6. 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.
7. Styling with an air dryer should be performed on hair that is
  - a. damp.
  - b. freshly cut.
  - c. dripping wet.
  - d. completely dry.
8. 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
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
  - d. In neat stacks by the shampoo bowl

**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.nictesting.org](http://www.nictesting.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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**Answers**

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