

RNCCAP Exam Blueprint Specifications


Prepared by Touchstone Institute

April 25, 2023

Contents

Purpose and Assumptions of the Exam	2
Exam Specifications	2
Performance-based Objective Structured Clinical Exam	2
References	9
Glossary	10

Purpose and Assumptions of the Exam

The Registered Nurses of Canada Competency Assessment Program or RNCCAP is designed to assess the knowledge, skills and attitudes of those seeking Registered Nurse (RN) registration within Canada. The exam assesses an applicant's current knowledge, skills and attitudes using entry-to-practice competencies ([CNO, 2018](#) and [CRNA, 2019](#)) at a level **expected of a recent graduate of a Nursing Program in Canada**.

The RNCCAP is a revised and updated version of the original Internationally Educated Nurses Competency Assessment (IENCAP, 2015) and Alberta Registered Nurses Assessment Program (ARNAP, 2017).

Applicants for whom this exam is intended include:

- Internationally educated graduates of a nursing education program outside of Canada
- Canadian applicants for whom the colleges are seeking evidence of competence for return to practice

Exam Specifications

The RNCCAP is designed to assess thirteen competencies across five role domains using a nine station Performance-based Objective Structured Clinical Examination or OSCE format. **Table 1** provides an overall summary of the role domains, competencies, and the stations.

Note that, an additional non-scored station will be included in the exam for a total of 10 stations for each administration. Although it will assess a combination of competencies as described in this document, the exact specifications for the tenth station are not included in any of the tables.

About the Objective Structured Clinical Examination

The OSCE is best suited to measure examinee competence at the *Shows How* and *Knows How* levels in accordance with Miller's Pyramid of Assessment (see Figure 1 in References). An OSCE comprised of nine stations is recommended to yield acceptably high levels of reliability.

Performance-based Objective Structured Clinical Exam

Each of the nine (plus one non-scored) OSCE stations will comprise of a seven-minute client encounter (CE) and four-minute examiner oral question component (OQ). As indicated in Table 1, seven competencies will be assessed during the client encounter component of the station and six as examiner oral questions. The specific competency statements associated with each competency is reflected in **Table 2**.

Table 1. RNCCAP: Performance-based OSCE Competency Specifications Matrix

Role Domain	Competency	Descriptor <i>(The minimum expectation of a recent RN graduate)</i>	Competency Statement Code	Component	Stations								
					1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Clinician	Health History & Data Collection	Conducts a holistic nursing assessment to collect comprehensive and relevant information on client health status.	1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.20	CE	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
	Physical Assessment	Conducts a physical assessment to collect relevant information on client health status in an efficient and logical sequence.	1.1, 1.2	CE		x		x		x		x	
	Prioritization	Recognizes and responds immediately when client safety is actually or potentially affected.	1.8, 1.9	CE	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
	Implementation of Care Strategies	Implements evidence-informed practices of care strategies to promote wellness, prevent illness, and minimize disease.	1.10, 1.11, 1.12, 1.25, 1.27	CE	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
	Analysis & Interpretation of Findings	Analyzes and interprets data obtained in client assessment to anticipate and inform ongoing decision-making about client health status.	1.4	OQ	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
	Nursing Care Plan Development	Develops a holistic and evidence-informed plan of care.	1.5, 1.7, 1.22	OQ	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
	Evaluation & Monitoring of Care	Evaluates effectiveness of plan of care and modifies accordingly.	1.6	OQ		x		x		x		x	
Communicator	Communication	Engages in effective communication using a variety of strategies to respond to the client and their context.	3.2, 3.3, 3.5, 3.7, 3.8	CE	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Professional, Leader & Scholar	Responsibility & Integrity	Demonstrates a professional, confident, honest, integrous and respectful presence in all interactions and maintains professional boundaries with clients and the healthcare team.	2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.5, 2.6, 6.6, 6.7, 6.8, 6.11, 9.1, 9.2, 9.3	CE	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
	Legal Obligation	Maintains client privacy, confidentiality, and security and complies with legislation, practice standards, ethics, and organizational policies.	2.4, 2.9, 2.10, 2.13, 2.14	OQ	x		x		x		x		
Advocate	Advocacy	Advocates for safe, competent, compassionate, and ethical care for clients (including their representatives).	7.2, 7.6, 7.7, 7.9, 7.10, 7.12, 7.13	OQ	x		x		x		x		
Collaborator, Coordinator & Educator	Collaboration with the Healthcare Team	Collaborates and coordinates with the healthcare team to support care planning and transitions of care to meet clients' changing needs.	4.1, 4.2, 5.2	OQ		x		x		x		x	
	Collaboration with the Client	Collaborates to select strategies to address needs of diverse clients and contexts incorporating relevant teaching and learning theories.	5.1, 5.7, 8.2, 8.3, 8.4	CE	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	

Table 2. RNCCAP: Performance-based OSCE Competency Statements

Role Domain	Competency	Descriptor (The minimum expectation of a recent RN graduate)	Competency Statement	Station Component	# of Stations
Clinician	Health History & Data Collection	Conducts a holistic nursing assessment to collect comprehensive and relevant information on client health status.	1.1 Provides safe, ethical, competent, compassionate, client-centred and evidence-informed nursing care across the lifespan in response to client needs. 1.2 Conducts a holistic nursing assessment to collect comprehensive information on client health status. 1.3 Uses principles of trauma-informed care which places priority on trauma survivors' safety, choice, and control. 1.20 Incorporates suicide prevention approaches when providing nursing care.	CE	9
	Physical Assessment	Conducts a physical assessment to collect relevant information on client health status in an efficient and logical sequence.	1.1 Provides safe, ethical, competent, compassionate, client-centred and evidence-informed nursing care across the lifespan in response to client needs. 1.2 Conducts a holistic nursing assessment to collect comprehensive information on client health status	CE	4
	Prioritization	Recognizes and responds immediately when client safety is actually or potentially affected.	1.8 Recognizes and responds immediately when client safety is affected. (Similarly described by 7.1 Recognizes and takes action in situations where client safety is actually or potentially compromised) 1.9 Recognizes and responds immediately when client's condition is deteriorating	CE	9
	Implementation of Care Strategies	Implements evidence-informed practices of care strategies to promote wellness, prevent illness, and minimize disease.	1.10 Prepares clients for and performs procedures, treatments, and follow up care. 1.11 Applies knowledge of pharmacology and principles of safe medication practice. 1.12 Implements evidence-informed practices of pain prevention, manages client's pain, and provides comfort through pharmacological and non-pharmacological interventions. 1.25 Uses strategies to promote wellness, to prevent illness, and to minimize disease and injury in clients, self, and others. 1.27 Implements evidence-informed practices for infection prevention and control.	CE	9
	Analysis & Interpretation of Findings	Analyzes and interprets data obtained in client assessment to anticipate and inform ongoing decision-making about client health status.	1.4 Analyzes and interprets data obtained in client assessment to inform ongoing decision-making about client health status.	OQ	9
	Nursing Care Plan Development	Develops a holistic and evidence informed plan of care.	1.5 Develops plans of care using critical inquiry to support professional judgment and reasoned decision-making.	OQ	9

Role Domain	Competency	Descriptor <i>(The minimum expectation of a recent RN graduate)</i>	Competency Statement	Station Component	# of Stations
			1.7 Anticipates actual and potential health risks and possible unintended outcomes. 1.22 Incorporates knowledge from nursing science, social sciences, humanities, and health-related research into plans of care.		
	Evaluation & Monitoring of Care	Evaluates effectiveness of plan of care and modifies accordingly.	1.6 Evaluates effectiveness of plan of care and modifies accordingly.	OQ	4 (Physical stations only)
Communicator	Communication	Engages in effective communication using a variety of strategies to respond to the client and their context.	3.2 Engages in active listening to understand and respond to the client's experience, preferences, and health goals. 3.3 Uses evidence-informed communication skills to build trusting, compassionate and therapeutic relationships with clients. 3.5 Incorporates the process of relational practice to adapt communication skills. 3.7 Communicates effectively in complex and rapidly changing situations. 3.8 Documents and reports clearly, concisely, accurately, and in a timely manner.	CE	9
Professional, Leader & Scholar	Responsibility & Integrity	Demonstrates a professional, confident, honest, integrous and respectful presence in all interactions and maintains professional boundaries with clients and the healthcare team.	2.1 Demonstrates accountability, accepts responsibility, and seeks assistance as necessary for decisions and action. 2.2 Demonstrates a professional presence, and confidence, honesty, integrity, and respect in all interactions. 2.3 Exercises professional judgment when using agency policies and procedures, or when practicing in their absence. 2.5 Identifies the influence of personal values, beliefs, and positional power on clients and the health care team and acts to reduce bias and influences. 2.6 Establishes and maintains professional boundaries with clients and the health care team. 6.6 Demonstrates self-awareness through reflective practice and solicitation of feedback. 6.7 Takes action to support culturally safe practice environments. 6.8 Uses and allocates resources wisely. 6.11 Adapts practice to meet client care needs within a continually changing health care system.	CE	9

Role Domain	Competency	Descriptor <i>(The minimum expectation of a recent RN graduate)</i>	Competency Statement	Station Component	# of Stations
			<p>9.1 Uses best evidence to make informed decisions.</p> <p>9.2 Translates knowledge from relevant sources into professional practice.</p> <p>9.3 Engages in self-reflection to interact from a place of cultural humility and create culturally safe environments where clients perceive respect for their unique health care practices, preferences, and decisions.</p>		
	Legal Obligation	Maintains client privacy, confidentiality, and security and complies with legislation, practice standards, ethics, and organizational policies.	<p>2.4 Maintains client privacy, confidentiality, and security by complying with legislation, practice standards, ethics, and organizational policies.</p> <p>2.9 Adheres to the self-regulatory requirements of jurisdictional legislation to protect the public by a) assessing own practice and individual competence to identify learning needs b) developing a learning plan using a variety of sources c) seeking and using new knowledge that may enhance, support, or influence competence in practice d) implementing and evaluating the effectiveness of the learning plan and developing future learning plans to maintain and enhance competence as a registered nurse.</p> <p>2.10 Demonstrates fitness to practice.</p> <p>2.13 Recognizes, acts on, and reports, harmful incidences, near misses, and no harm incidences.</p> <p>2.14 Recognizes, acts on, and reports actual and potential workplace and occupational safety risks.</p>	OQ	5 (Non-physical stations only)
Advocate	Advocacy	Advocates for safe, competent, compassionate, and ethical care for clients (including their representatives).	<p>7.2 Resolves questions about unclear orders, decisions, actions, or treatment.</p> <p>7.6 Advocates for safe, competent, compassionate, and ethical care for clients.</p> <p>7.7 Supports and empowers clients in making informed decisions about their health care and respects their decisions.</p> <p>7.9 Assesses that clients have an understanding and ability to be an active participant in their own care and facilitates appropriate strategies for clients who are unable to be fully involved.</p> <p>7.10 Advocates for client's rights and ensures informed consent, guided by legislation, practice standards, and ethics.</p>	OQ	5 (Non-physical stations only)

Role Domain	Competency	Descriptor <i>(The minimum expectation of a recent RN graduate)</i>	Competency Statement	Station Component	# of Stations
			7.12 Assesses client’s understanding of informed consent, and implements actions when client is unable to provide informed consent. 7.13 Demonstrates knowledge of a substitute decision maker’s role in providing informed consent and decision-making for client care.		
Collaborator, Coordinator & Educator	Collaboration with the Health Care Team	Collaborates and coordinates with the healthcare team to support care planning and transitions of care to meet clients’ changing needs	4.1 Demonstrates collaborative professional relationships. 4.2 Initiates collaboration to support care planning and safe, continuous transitions from one health care facility to another, or to residential, community or home and self-care 5.2 Monitors client care to help ensure needed services happen at the right time and in the correct sequence.	OQ	4 (Physical stations only)
	Collaboration with the Client	Collaborates to select strategies to address needs of diverse clients and contexts incorporating relevant teaching and learning theories	5.1 Consults with clients and health-care team members to make ongoing adjustments required by changes in the availability of services or client health status. 5.7 Prepares clients for transitions in care. 8.2 Applies strategies to optimize client health literacy. 8.3 Selects, develops, and uses relevant teaching and learning theories and strategies to address diverse clients and contexts, including lifespan, family, and cultural considerations. 8.4 Evaluates effectiveness of health teaching and revises education plan if necessary.	CE	9

Table 3 summarizes the condition and context specifications which the stations are required to meet. These specifications are used to guide the development of the stations as well as each version of the exam.

Table 3. RNCCAP: Performance-based OSCE Conditions & Context Specifications Matrix

Station Context Specifications	
Discipline	# of stations
Medical	2
Surgical	2
Mental Health	2
Maternal & Child Health	1
Palliative	1
Community	1
Condition	
Acute	1-2
Chronic	1-2
Medication Management	1-2
Pain Symptom Management	1-2
Emergent	1-2
Health Promotion	1
Lifespan/Age	
Child 0-19yrs	1
Adult 20-64yrs	4
Geriatric 65+yrs	4
Gender	
The ratio of M:F (no > than)	4:5
Setting <i>(choose any from the following list)</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hospital (general, maternal, pediatric, psychiatric) • Rural or remote clinic • Long-term care facility or supportive living setting • Community health clinic or primary health clinic • Mental health/Psychiatry • Palliative Care/End of life • Public health clinic • Homecare (Private residence/group home) 	

References

1. CNO's [Entry-to-Practice Competencies for Registered Nurses \(2018\)](#)
2. CRNA's [Entry-Level Competencies for the Practice of Registered Nurses \(2019\)](#)
3. IENCAP Blueprint (2016)
4. ARNAP Examiner Scoring Scheme (2017)
5. Miller's Pyramid for Assessment of Competence: Retrieved from <https://openpress.usask.ca/ideabook/chapter/millers-pyramid-of-clinical-competence/>



Figure 1. Miller's Pyramid for Assessment of Clinical Competence.

Glossary

Client Encounter: The portion or component of a station where the examinee is given a specific amount of time to interact with a standardized client to complete a clinical challenge.

Competency: The integrated knowledge, skills, and attitudes, identified as essential to the profession and public protection.

Competency statement: The statement as reflected within the competency documents used to define the knowledge, skills and attitudes related to a specific competency.

Contexts: Discipline, lifespan, setting etc., that will guide scenario development of the exam content.

Descriptors: Minimum expected competency behaviour in alignment with the standard of the exam.

Examiner oral questions: The portion or component of a station where the examinee is given a specific amount of time to answer a set of specific oral questions asked by the examiner and related to the station challenge.

Role Domain: Roles as defined in the competency documents that were combined into broad areas of the profession and made up of specific competencies as assessed within the exam.

Standard: the anchor against which all examinee performances are compared.