National Barber Styling Theory Examination
CIB

National-Interstate Council of State Boards of Cosmetology (NIC)

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CANDIDATE INFORMATION BULLETIN (CIB)

EXAMINATION CONTENT AND IMPORTANT INSTRUCTIONS

Please visit your official examination provider website OR www.nictesting.org for the most current bulletin prior to testing.

The National Barber Styling Theory Examination is a licensure examination for Barber Styling, developed by the National-Interstate Council of State Boards of Cosmetology (NIC).

This bulletin contains IMPORTANT INFORMATION regarding National Barber Styling Theory Examination content and references.

The time allowed for this examination is 90 minutes.

PLEASE REVIEW ALL INFORMATION CAREFULLY.

For each NIC National Theory Examination, there are multiple parts to every Candidate Information Bulletin (CIB):

- **Important Instructions and Examination Content Domain Sections** – This provides information and guidelines related to administration of the Theory examination and information about the scope of content covered in the examination.
- **References** – This provides a list of references used to develop and support the content covered in NIC examinations. References will be the same for Theory, Practical, Written Practical, and Additional Sections for each exam.

BE CERTAIN TO REVIEW ALL PARTS OF THIS NIC EXAMINATION CIB CAREFULLY!

IMPORTANT INSTRUCTIONS

General

- 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. *Picture ID is required for re-entry into the examination.*
- All examinations are administered in a testing environment.

Standardized Administration

Due to standardization of the NIC National Examinations, proctors and examiners are required to adhere to the following standards:

- With the exception of verbal instructions, proctors and examination administration personnel are NOT allowed to speak with candidates.
- If a candidate experiences an emergency situation, they may notify the proctor by raising their hand.

Prohibited Items

- The following provides examples of materials and actions that are prohibited in the examination room during the examination administration:
  - Possession of cellular phones, watches (of any kind), pagers, tablets, computers, projectors, cameras, or any other electronic or recording devices, printed materials, or handwritten notes.

  - Purses, bags, coats, hats, and any other personal items not directly needed to complete the examination, are not allowed.

- Communicating to other candidates or any examiner.
- Exhibiting disruptive behavior. The above referenced items or actions are not an exhaustive list.

Failure to comply with any of these conditions or exhibiting ANY behavior that suggests an effort to cheat will result in immediate dismissal from the examination and the candidates' actions reported to the proper authorities.

BARBER STYLING THEORY EXAMINATION CONTENT OUTLINE

Domain Details

The following outlines the scope of content covered by the NIC National Barber Styling Theory Examination. The percentages represent the percentage of items from each domain. The examination contains 110 items, of which 100 items are weighted and contribute to the candidate's final score.

I. Scientific Concepts (35%)
   A. Infection control and safety practices
      1. Identify how disease and infection are caused and transmitted
      2. Apply principles of infection control
         a. Sanitation/Cleansing
         b. Disinfection
         c. Sterilization
         d. Contamination and cross-contamination
      3. Apply blood exposure procedures
      4. Identify requirements of government agencies (e.g., CDC, OSHA, EPA)
   B. Human anatomy and physiology
      1. Identify function and structure of the:
         a. Hair and scalp
         b. Skin
      2. Identify bones related to:
         a. Head and face
         b. Neck, shoulders, and upper back
      3. Identify muscles and joints and their functions related to:

a. Head and face

b. Neck, shoulders, and upper back

4. Understand the functions of body systems:
   a. Nervous system

   b. Circulatory system

   c. Endocrine system

   d. Integumentary system

C. Identify signs and symptoms of conditions, disorders, and diseases related to skin
   1. Types

   2. Treatments

D. Identify signs and symptoms of conditions, disorders, and diseases related to hair
   1. Types

   2. Treatments

E. Basic chemistry of products used in barbering
   1. Understand the chemical pH scale

   2. Understand purpose and effects of products, ingredients, and their interactions

   3. Understand interactions among chemicals

   4. Understand chemical reactions (e.g., overexposure, chemical burn, inhalation)

II. Implements and Equipment Used in Barbering (10%)

A. Identify function, purpose, and care of tools used in hair services
   1. Equipment (e.g., chair, workstation)

   2. Implements (e.g., razors, shears, combs/brushes)

   3. Supplies and materials (e.g., towels, drape, neck strips)

4. Electrical tools (e.g. clippers, blow dryers)

B. Understand and apply safety and sanitation practices for use of implements and equipment

III. Hair Care Services (40%)

A. Client consultation, analysis, and documentation for hair care services

1. Analyze condition of client's hair and scalp (i.e., assessment)

2. Recognize conditions that would prohibit service (i.e., contraindications)

3. Determine hair services and/or products

4. Document and maintain client records for hair services (e.g., consultation card, service history, medical history)

B. Hair care

1. Apply knowledge of draping (e.g., chemical, shampoo, hair cutting)

2. Apply knowledge of principles and procedures for shampooing and conditioning

3. Apply knowledge of principles and procedures for scalp treatments and scalp massage/manipulation

C. Hair design

1. Apply knowledge of principles, procedures, and safety of hair cutting

a. Shaping

b. Outlining

c. Neck shave

2. Apply knowledge of principles, procedures and safety of hair styling

a. Wet styling

b. Blowdry styling

c. Thermal styling

d. Natural hair styling (e.g., braiding, locks)

3. Apply knowledge of principles, procedures, and safety of hair enhancements

D. Apply knowledge of preparation, procedures, and safety for head shaving

E. Apply knowledge of principles, procedures, and safety for chemical services

1. Understand preliminary tests (e.g., purposes, uses, applications)

a. Predisposition

b. Strand test

2. Hair coloring (including facial hair)

3. Hair lightening

4. Foiling

5. Chemical hair relaxing/restructuring and curl reduction

a. Hydroxide

b. Thio

c. Keratin

6. Chemical waving/texturizing

a. Alkaline

b. Acid

c. Non-thio

IV. Facial Hair and Skin Care Services (15%)

A. Client consultation, analysis, and documentation for facial hair and skin care services

1. Evaluate client's skin (e.g., type, condition)

2. Identify contraindications

a. Disorders

b. Diseases

3. Determine facial hair services and/or products

4. Document and maintain client records for facial hair services (e.g., consultation card, service history, medical history)

B. Apply knowledge of draping for facial hair and skin care services

C. Apply knowledge of principles, procedures, and safety for facial hair and skin care services

1. Complete shave service with required strokes

2. Facial hair design

3. Facial (e.g., cleansing, steaming, mask)

4. Electrotherapy and light therapy

D. Apply knowledge of purpose and types of electrotherapy and light therapy

NATIONAL BARBER STYLING THEORY EXAMINATION SAMPLE QUESTIONS

The following sample questions are similar to those on the NIC National Barber Styling Theory Examination. Each question is followed by four answer options. Only one option is correct. Correct answers (keys) are listed along with the sample questions.

1. Anthrax and tetanus bacilli form which type of spores?
   A. Mitosis
   B. Flagella
   C. Spherical
   D. Infectious
2. All French style shears
   A. are cobalt metal.
   B. have a finger brace.
   C. are made in France.
   D. have tight pivots.
3. Prior to a shaving service the headrest MUST be
   A. washed and dried.
   B. disinfected and covered.
   C. washed and removed.
   D. sanitized and sterilized.
4. To avoid damage to muscle tissue, the movements of a massage are directed
   A. away from the origin of the muscle.
   B. toward the origin of the muscle.
   C. around the origin of the muscle.
   D. above the origin of the muscle.
5. Which of the following can permanently relieve split ends?
   A. Applying oil to the ends
   B. Using a styling gel on the ends
   C. Moistening the neds
   D. Cutting the ends

6. The diameter of a single strand of hair is also called

   A. growth pattern.

   B. porosity.

   C. density.

   D. texture.

7. What should be performed FIRST before applying permanent haircolor

   A. Strand test

   B. Patch test

   C. Curl test

   D. Texture test

8. Before sodium hydroxide processing, hair should be analyzed to determine its

   A. acidity.

   B. alkalinity.

   C. texture, porosity, and elasticity.

   D. density, color, and end bonds.

Table 1: Answer Key

Item	Key
1	C
2	B
3	B
4	B
5	D
6	D
7	B
8	C

NATIONAL-INTERSTATE COUNCIL OF STATE BOARDS OF COSMETOLOGY (NIC) REFERENCES

This list provides the references used to develop and support the content covered in the NIC National Barber Styling examinations. References will be the same across exam types for each exam. Candidates are responsible for using these most updated versions of references, as these editions were used to reference test material.

Reference Date: September 01, 2025

Standard

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