



National Barber Styling Written Practical Examination CIB

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

Effective Date: June 01, 2025 Revision Date: September 01, 2025

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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 Written Practical 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 Written Practical Examination content and administration for core services and additional sections and references.

The time allowed for this examination is 120 minutes.

PLEASE REVIEW ALL INFORMATION CAREFULLY.

For each NIC National Written Practical 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 Written Practical examination and information about the scope of content covered in the Written Practical examination.

IMPORTANT INSTRUCTIONS

- **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.

IMPORTANT INSTRUCTIONS

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 WRITTEN PRACTICAL EXAMINATION CONTENT OUTLINE

Domain Details

The following outlines the scope of content covered by the NIC National Barber Styling Written Practical Examination. The percentages represent the percentage of items from each domain. The examination contains 60 items, of which 50 items are weighted and contribute to the candidate's final score. The Core Domain Sections are based on the national job analysis.

I. Scientific Concepts (20%)

A. Infection control and safety practices

1. Apply principles of infection control
 - a. Sanitation/Cleansing
 - b. Disinfection
 - c. Sterilization
 - d. Contamination and cross-contamination
2. Apply blood exposure procedures

B. Basic chemistry of products used in barbering

1. Understand purpose and effects of products, ingredients, and their interactions
2. Understand interactions among chemicals
3. Understand chemical reactions (e.g., overexposure, chemical burn, inhalation)

II. Implements and Equipment Used in Barbering (20%)

A. Identify function, purpose, and care of tools used in hair services

*BARBER STYLING WRITTEN PRACTICAL EXAMINATION CONTENT
OUTLINE*

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 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

*BARBER STYLING WRITTEN PRACTICAL EXAMINATION CONTENT
OUTLINE*

- 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 (20%)
 - A. Client consultation, analysis, and documentation for facial hair and skin care services

*BARBER STYLING WRITTEN PRACTICAL EXAMINATION CONTENT
OUTLINE*

1. Evaluate client's skin (e.g., type, condition)
 2. Identify contraindications
 - a. Disorders
 - b. Diseases
 3. Determine 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, steam towel massage)

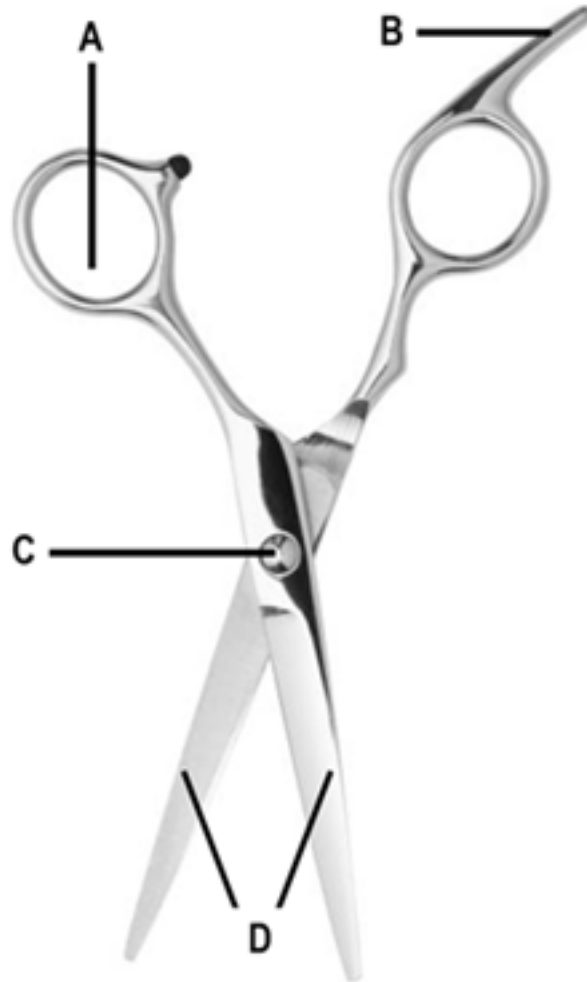
*NATIONAL BARBER STYLING WRITTEN PRACTICAL EXAMINATION
SAMPLE QUESTIONS*

**NATIONAL BARBER STYLING WRITTEN PRACTICAL
EXAMINATION SAMPLE QUESTIONS**

The following sample questions are similar to those on the NIC National Barber Styling Written Practical 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. The FIRST step prior to disinfecting implements is to
 - A. rinse thoroughly with hot water
 - B. remove all hair and visible debris.
 - C. completely immerse in a sanitizing solution.
 - D. expose to UV light for 15 minutes.
2. A barber discovers a client has head lice. What action should be taken?
 - A. Use a flea comb to remove lice and continue service
 - B. Recommend cutting hair down to 1/2 of an inch
 - C. Use an astringent and steam product into scalp
 - D. Recommend the client seek advice of a physician
3. A client is cut with the razor during a neck shave. What is the proper way to apply styptic powder on the cut?
 - A. Damp finger
 - B. Cotton swab
 - C. Clean styling comb
 - D. Styptic powder cap
4. Put the following steps of a draping for a haircut in order
 - A. lean client back, place towel over neck, secure cape, place towel over cape
 - B. place towel over neck, secure cape, place towel over cape lean client back
 - C. secure cape, place towel over cape, place towel over neck, lean client back
 - D. place towel over neck, secure cape, lean client back, place towel over cape
5. Select the finger hole on the image below.

*NATIONAL BARBER STYLING WRITTEN PRACTICAL EXAMINATION
SAMPLE QUESTIONS*



*NATIONAL BARBER STYLING WRITTEN PRACTICAL EXAMINATION
SAMPLE QUESTIONS*

Table 1: Answer Key

Item	Key
1	B
2	D
3	B
4	A
5	B

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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