

PANCE Content Blueprint

(effective January 2019)

Beginning in 2019, there was a new content blueprint released for the Physician Assistant National Certifying Examination (PANCE). The content blueprint provides guidance on the information assessed on the Physician Assistant National Certifying Examination (PANCE). The examination is categorized in two dimensions:

1. Knowledge of the diseases and disorders physician assistants encounter; and
2. Knowledge and skills related to tasks physician assistants perform when treating patients.

The detailed listings provided under each of these two categories represent examples of the material that may be covered on PANCE. It is not possible to include all topics on a single exam, and it may be possible that some questions on the exam cover content that is not listed in the examples.

The content blueprint for PANCE is based on information provided from certified physician assistants who participate in profession-wide practice analysis studies. Certified PAs are involved throughout the exam development process, including: reviewing results of the practice analysis, writing questions that appear on PANCE, reviewing exams before they are administered, reviewing performance data for exam questions, and developing recommendations for the passing standard. Certified PAs work with NCCPA to continuously review the content included on PANCE to ensure it is relevant and current, as the practice of medicine changes and treatment guidelines are revised or new ones introduced.

Medical Content Categories	Percent Allocation*
Cardiovascular System	13%
Dermatologic System	5%
Endocrine System	7%
Eyes, Ears, Nose, and Throat	7%
Gastrointestinal System/Nutrition	9%
Genitourinary System (Male and Female)	5%
Hematologic System	5%
Infectious Diseases	6%

Musculoskeletal System	8%
Neurologic System	7%
Psychiatry/Behavioral Science	6%
Pulmonary System	10%
Renal System	5%
Reproductive System (Male and Female)	7%

Task Categories	Percent Allocation*
History Taking and Performing Physical Examination	17%
Using Diagnostic and Laboratory Studies	12%
Formulating Most Likely Diagnosis	18%
Managing Patients	
Health Maintenance, Patient Education, and Preventive Measures	10%
Clinical Intervention	14%
Pharmaceutical Therapeutics	14%
Applying Basic Scientific Concepts	10%
Professional Practice	5%

*Medical content comprises 95% of the exam. All medical content questions are also coded to one of the task areas, with the exception of the professional practice task category. Questions related to professional practice issues comprise 5% of the exam. In addition, up to 20% of the exam may be related to general surgical topics. The specific percentage allocations may vary slightly on exams.

Sample NCCPA Questions

PAs preparing for PANCE have often asked the NCCPA about how the exam items are developed and should be answered. To help address that request, NCCPA has taken items removed from the item pool and created a tool for PAs. In the PDF document below, PAs can review sample NCCPA items and critiques written by NCCPA test committee members.

To review sample NCCPA questions and explanations regarding why the correct answer is correct and why the other answer choices are incorrect, please [click here](#).