The National Cosmetology theory examination is the national licensure examination for Cosmetology, 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 Cosmetology examination, sample questions and answers. The time allowed for the Cosmetology theory examination is 90 minutes.

**SCIENTIFIC CONCEPTS 30%**

**Infection Control**
- Microbiology
  - Bacteria
  - Viruses
  - Parasites
  - Immunity
  - Prevention
- Methods of infection control
  - Sanitation
  - Disinfection
  - Sterilization
- Federal regulations
  - OSHA guidelines
  - Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS)
  - Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
  - Food and Drug Administration (FDA)
  - Universal precautions
- First Aid
  - Minor bleeding
  - Minor burns
  - Minor eye irritation

**Human Anatomy**
- Cells
- Tissue
- Organs
  - Heart
  - Lungs
  - Skin
- **Skeletal system**
  - Skull
  - Bones of the face
  - Bones of the neck
  - Bones of the shoulders
  - Bones of the arms and hands
  - Bones of the legs and feet
- **Muscular system**
  - Scalp muscles
  - Mastication muscles
  - Mouth muscles
  - Muscles of the eye and nose
- **Muscules of the arms and hands**
- **Muscules of the legs and feet**
- **Muscules of the neck**
- **Muscules of the shoulders and upper back**
- **Types of joints**
  - **Circulatory system**
  - **Blood-vascular or cardiovascular system**
  - **Lymph-vascular system**
- **Endocrine system**
- **Respiratory system**
- **Integumentary system**
- **Nervous system**
- **Excretory system**

**Ergonomics/Body Positioning**

**Basic Principles of Chemistry**
- Matter
- The pH scale
- Nutrition
- Medication
- Compounds
- Mixtures
- Product ingredients
- Product labeling
- Product safety

**Basic Principles of Electricity**
- Electric current
- Electricity in cosmetology
  - Electrotherapy
  - Light therapy

**Hair Care and Services 40%**

**Trichology**
- Properties and structure of the hair and scalp
  - Shaft
  - Root
  - Keratinization
- Hair analysis and hair quality
  - Porosity
  - Elasticity
  - Texture
  - Density
- Stages of hair growth
- Hair loss

**Haircutting Procedures**
- Client consultation
- Desired look
- Face shape
- Lifestyle and/or climate
- Hair analysis

**Haircoloring Procedures**
- Areas of the head
- Elevation or projection
- Lines and angles
- Crosschecking
- Texturizing
- Tools and safety
- Electrical
- Manual

**Draping Procedures**
- Shampooing
- Haircutting
- Chemical services
- Thermal

**Shampooing, Conditioning, Massaging and Brushing Procedures**
- Hair analysis
- Scalp analysis
- Shampooing
  - Product selection
  - Procedure
  - Conditioning
  - Product selection
  - Procedure
  - Scalp treatments
  - Scalp massage

**Principles of Hair Design**
- Elements of hair design
  - Form
  - Line/Direction
  - Growth pattern
  - Texture
  - Color

**Principles of balance and design**
- Facial shapes

**Basic haircuts**
- Solid form or blunt haircut
- Graduated form
- Layered form
- Combination form

**Basic haircuts**

**Hairstyling Procedures**
- Client consultation
- Wet styling
- Thermal styling
- Braiding

**Wigs, Hair Enhancements and Extensions**
- Client consultation
- Wigs and hair enhancements
  - Wig composition (e.g., human or synthetic)
  - Wig construction (e.g., cap and capless)
  - Wig care

**Chemical Services Consultation**
- Hair analysis
- Scalp analysis
- Predisposition (skin patch) test
- Preliminary strand test
- Desired results

**Chemical Services**
- Chemical waving
  - pH balance of chemical waves
  - Chemical waving procedures

**Chemical hair relaxers**
- pH balance of chemical hair relaxers
- Chemical hair relaxing procedures

**Haircoloring Procedures**
- Law of color
- Types of haircolor
  - Temporary haircolor
  - Semi-and demi-permanent haircolor
  - Permanent
  - Lighteners

**Haircolor applications**
- Virgin
- Retouch
- Color correction

Please visit [www.nictesting.org](http://www.nictesting.org) for the most current bulletin prior to testing.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SKIN CARE AND SERVICES</th>
<th>NAIL CARE AND SERVICES</th>
<th>SAMPLE QUESTIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Skin Histology</strong></td>
<td><strong>Nail Care Service Consultation</strong></td>
<td>The following sample questions are similar to those on the NIC Cosmetology Theory Examination. Each question is followed by four answer choices. Only one choice is correct. Correct answers are listed following the sample questions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>◦ Composition of the skin</td>
<td>◦ <strong>Nail Structure</strong></td>
<td>1. Which of the following substances is usually contained in a toner?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Layers of the skin</td>
<td>◦ Nail composition</td>
<td>a. Metallic dye</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Nerves of the skin</td>
<td>◦ Nail growth</td>
<td>b. Compound dye</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Glands of the skin</td>
<td>◦ Nail conditions</td>
<td>c. Vegetable tint</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Types of skin</td>
<td>• Disorders</td>
<td>d. Oxidation tint</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Skin pigmentation</td>
<td>• Diseases</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>◦ Conditions of the skin</td>
<td>◦ <strong>Manicure and Pedicure Procedures</strong></td>
<td>2. Which one of the following should be applied to the skin after removal of whiteheads?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Disorders</td>
<td>◦ Nail care tools</td>
<td>a. A caustic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Diseases</td>
<td>• Equipment</td>
<td>b. Deodorant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>◦ Functions of the skin</td>
<td>• Implements</td>
<td>c. An antiseptic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Products and supplies</td>
<td>d. Bleaching cream</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>◦ Types of manicures and pedicures</td>
<td>3. Before disinfecting combs and brushes, they should be</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Basic manicure and pedicure</td>
<td>a. wiped with a towel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Specialty manicures and pedicures</td>
<td>b. wiped with a tissue.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>◦ Massage procedures</td>
<td>c. rinsed in cold water.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Hand and arm massage</td>
<td>d. cleaned with soap and warm water.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Foot and leg massage</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>◦ Infection control procedures for pedicure basin</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>◦ <strong>Advanced Nail Care</strong></td>
<td>4. What is the process used in tapering and thinning with scissors?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>◦ Preservice and postservice procedures</td>
<td>a. Clipping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>◦ Nail tips</td>
<td>b. Slithering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>◦ Nail wraps and overlays</td>
<td>c. Razor cutting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Acrylics</td>
<td>d. Layer cutting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Gels</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>◦ Nail art</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>◦ <strong>Facial Procedures</strong></td>
<td>5. The action of chemical hair relaxers causes the hair to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>◦ Skin care tools</td>
<td>a. stop growing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Equipment</td>
<td>b. harden and set.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Implements</td>
<td>c. form new curls.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Products and supplies</td>
<td>d. soften and swell.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>◦ Facial treatments</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Electrical therapy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Massage manipulations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Topical applications</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>◦ <strong>Facial Makeup Application</strong></td>
<td>6. When should a predisposition test be performed?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>◦ Makeup color theory</td>
<td>a. When the scalp has cuts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>◦ Cosmetic application procedures</td>
<td>b. Before applying peroxide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Basic</td>
<td>c. Before every application of oxidizing tints</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Specialty</td>
<td>d. Before any application of vegetable coloring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Corrective</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>◦ Artificial eyelashes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Predisposition test</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Application</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>◦ Eyelash and eyebrow coloring</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>◦ <strong>Skincare and Services</strong></td>
<td>7. At what part of the nail does growth start?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>◦ Health analysis</td>
<td>a. Wall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>◦ Health history</td>
<td>b. Matrix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>◦ <strong>Draping Procedures for Facial Services</strong></td>
<td>c. Lunula</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>◦ <strong>Temporary Hair Removal Procedures</strong></td>
<td>d. Cuticle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>◦ Shaving</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>◦ Tweezing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>◦ Waxing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>◦ Depilatories</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>◦ Threading</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>◦ Sugaring</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>◦ <strong>Facial Procedures</strong></td>
<td>8. What is the function of sebum?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>◦ Skin care tools</td>
<td>a. To dry the skin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Equipment</td>
<td>b. To harden the skin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Implements</td>
<td>c. To cleanse the skin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Products and supplies</td>
<td>d. To lubricate the skin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>◦ Facial treatments</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Electrical therapy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Massage manipulations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Topical applications</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>◦ <strong>Facial Makeup Application</strong></td>
<td>9. Sterilization is the process of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>◦ Makeup color theory</td>
<td>a. keeping bacteria alive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>◦ Cosmetic application procedures</td>
<td>b. destroying offensive odors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Basic</td>
<td>c. destroying beneficial microorganisms only.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Specialty</td>
<td>d. destroying both harmful and beneficial bacteria.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Corrective</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>◦ Artificial eyelashes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Predisposition test</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Application</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>◦ Eyelash and eyebrow coloring</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**TO TAKE THE NIC COSMETOLOGY ONLINE PRACTICE EXAM**

**CLICK HERE**

**OR GO TO:**


**FOR ASSISTANCE, PLEASE CALL IQT AT 1-866-773-1114.**

($39.00 fee applies)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRIMARY REFERENCES (formerly referred to as Cosmetology References)</th>
<th>SUPPORTING REFERENCES (formerly referred to as Optional References)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Salon Fundamentals Cosmetology**  
December, 2013, 8th Edition  
Pivot Point International, Inc.  
World Headquarters  
1560 Sherman Avenue, Suite 700  
Evanston, IL 60201  
800-886-4247  
[www.pivot-point.com](http://www.pivot-point.com) | **Salon Fundamentals Cosmetology**  
2011, 2nd Edition  
Pivot Point International, Inc.  
World Headquarters  
1560 Sherman Avenue, Suite 700  
Evanston, IL 60201  
800-886-4247  
[www.pivot-point.com](http://www.pivot-point.com) |
| **Milady’s Standard Cosmetology: Fundamentals**  
2012  
Milady  
5 Maxwell Drive  
Clifton Park NY 12065-2919  
[www.milady.cengage.com](http://www.milady.cengage.com) | **Milady’s Standard Cosmetology: Fundamentals**  
2008  
Delmar Learning  
5 Maxwell Drive  
Clifton Park NY 12065-2912  
[www.milady.cengage.com](http://www.milady.cengage.com) |
| NIC Infection Control and Safety Standards  
National-Interstate Council of State Boards of Cosmetology  
| NIC Cleaning and Disinfecting of Circulating and Non Circulating Tubs and Spa’s for All Industry Modalities  
NIC, Inc., August 2007  
[www.nictesting.org](http://www.nictesting.org) |  |