

Report of the Practice Analysis of Family Nurse Practitioners

Conducted on behalf of the
American Academy of Nurse Practitioners
Certification Program



Conducted by
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Executive Summary

In 2015, Professional Examination Service (ProExam) conducted a practice analysis of family nurse practitioners (FNPs) for the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners Certification Program (AANPCP). The AANPCP sponsors the FNP National Certification Examination, an entry-level exam for advanced practice nurses. It is designed to assess the knowledge base required to function in the advanced practice registered nurse (APRN) role of nurse practitioner, with a family population focus.

In order to update the test content outline for the FNP National Certification Examination, the practice analysis was designed to gather qualitative and quantitative information, as well as data regarding current practices in the profession. An appointed task force of subject-matter experts updated an existing delineation of domains, tasks, knowledge areas, and procedures; this delineation was contained in the 2011 FNP National Certification Examination outline. The purpose of the update was to augment, edit, and refine the outline to best reflect current practices. Ten additional subject-matter experts representing diverse practice settings, and background characteristics, performed independent reviews of the work of the Task Force.

An online survey was conducted to gather evidence, from practitioners, regarding the domains, tasks, knowledge areas, and procedures. Frequency and importance ratings were collected for each task, knowledge area and procedure. More than 2800 FNPs were invited to participate. The completion rate was 23%. Demographic characteristics of the survey respondents were judged to align with those of the population of FNPs.

Results related to the validation ratings supported the inclusion of all the tasks, knowledge areas, and all but one of the delineated procedures, in the test content outline for the FNP examination. Percentage weights were adopted for the distribution of test questions across domains of practice and patient age ranges. The percentage weights support examination construction and the validated tasks, knowledge areas, and procedures, support item writing. Adoption of the new content outline will permit the ongoing construction of relevant, content-valid examinations for FNPs.