



Report of the Practice Analysis of Family Nurse Practitioners

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



Conducted by
PSI Services LLC
611 N. Brand Blvd. 10th Floor
Glendale, CA 91203

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Executive Summary

This report describes the methodology and procedures used to conduct a practice analysis and develop the exam specifications for the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners Certification Board (AANPCB) Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP) certification examination.

The three major activities that comprise the practice analysis process described in this report are as follows:

1. **Practice Analysis Committee Meeting** – A gathering of subject matter experts (SMEs) to discuss and develop a description of the scope of practice.
2. **Practice Analysis Survey** – A large-scale survey of practitioners not involved with the SME panel to validate the task and knowledge statements developed by the committee.
3. **Development of Examination Specifications** – The development of an Examination Content Outline by the committee based on the results of the survey.

Several practitioners were assembled by AANPCB to serve as subject matter experts (SMEs). The individuals selected represent a wide variety of work-related characteristics such as years of experience, work setting, geographic location, and areas of specialty. This helps in developing a scope of practice that is reflective of the roles and responsibilities of the job role and is relatively free from bias. By analyzing the experiences and expertise of current practitioners, the results from the practice analysis become the basis of a validated assessment that reflects the competencies required for competent job performance.

The practice analysis process utilized in this study yields exam specifications that accurately reflect the scope of practice, allowing for the development of fair, accurate, and realistic assessments of candidates' readiness for certification. The resultant Examination Content Outline (Appendix E) indicates a 135-item examination with content distribution requirements at the task domain (i.e., competency area) level as well as age category level.

Task Domains

1. Assessment
2. Diagnoses
3. Plan
4. Evaluation

Patient Age Categories

1. Prenatal
2. Newborn
3. Infant
4. Child
5. Early Adolescent
6. Late Adolescent
7. Young Adult
8. Middle Adult
9. Older Adult
10. Elder Adult

Appendix E

Exam Content Outline

Task Statements

1	Assessment	36
A.	Obtain subjective patient information, such as relevant medical history, social history, family history, chief complaint, history of present illness, and review of systems	
B.	Perform physical examination to obtain objective information based on patient age or developmental level, health history, and comorbidities	
C.	Order, perform, and interpret screening and diagnostic tests	
2	Diagnosis	35
A.	Synthesize and analyze subjective and objective information to formulate differential diagnoses	
B.	Prioritize potential differential diagnoses, including recognizing urgent and emergent conditions	
C.	Establish primary diagnoses	
3	Plan	34
A.	Establish an individualized, patient-centered plan of care that is consistent with best evidence	
B.	Make referrals to and engage in consultation within interprofessional teams	
C.	Prescribe, order, and administer pharmacologic and non-pharmacologic therapies	
D.	Provide education, counselling, and health promotion strategies	
4	Evaluation	30
A.	Evaluate the effectiveness of the plan of care	
B.	Identify existing barriers	
C.	Modify the plan of care as appropriate based on patient outcomes	
D.	Coordinate follow-up and initiate referrals and consultations	
E.	Monitor ongoing plan of care	

Secondary Classifications

Patient Age Category	Number of items
Prenatal	3
Newborn	3
Infant	4
Child	8
Early Adolescent	7
Late Adolescent	12
Young Adult	26
Middle Adult	32
Older Adult	30
Elder	10

Applied Knowledge Areas

1 Pathophysiology

- A. Anatomy
- B. Physiology
- C. Pathophysiology
- D. Co-morbidities

2 Pharmacology

- A. Pharmacologic therapies
- B. Non-pharmacologic therapies
- C. Integrative therapies
- D. Polypharmacy
- E. Pain management

3 Physical Assessment

- A. Cultural competence/sensitivity
- B. Diagnostic and therapeutic tests
- C. Functional assessment
- D. Health history
- E. Mental health assessment
- F. Physical examination across the lifespan
- G. Signs and symptoms
- H. Therapeutic communication

4 Evidence-informed Practice

- A. Clinical decision-making
- B. Crisis management
- C. Differential diagnosis
- D. Health promotion, harm reduction, and disease prevention
- E. Healthcare economics
- F. Interprofessional practice
- G. Legal and ethical issues
- H. Patient and family education and counselling
- I. Principles of epidemiology, population health, and social determinants of health
- J. Procedures
- K. Transitions of care