Dr. Emily's NCLEX® Study Guide

Everything You Need to Know About the 2024 Next Gen NCLEX

By Dr. Emily Wilson, DNP

Introduction 1
Join our NCLEX Study Group 1
Subscribe to our NCLEX Question of the Day 3
"What is Next Gen NCLEX (NGN)?" 4
"When should I take the NCLEX?" 5
"Any advice for retaking the NCLEX?" 6
"How do I register to take the NCLEX?" 8
"How much does it cost to take the NCLEX?" 9
"Should I self-study or take a test prep course?" 9
"How does CAT work to determine if I pass?" 10
"What's the length of the NCLEX?" 11
"What do I need to pass the NCLEX?" 12
4 Simple Tips to Improve your NCLEX Score 13
How to Use Bootcamp's Readiness Self-Assessments 14
How to Use the Tagging System on Bootcamp 15
Essential Materials and Strongly Recommended Materials 16
Additional Resources 16
NCLEX Section Breakdown 17
2024 NCLEX Study Schedules 18

Introduction

Hi! I'm Dr. Emily, creator of NCLEX Bootcamp and graduate of Rush University. Passing the NCLEX is a huge milestone in your journey to becoming a registered nurse and I want to make this step as easy as possible for you. In this guide, I've compiled some of the most important advice I have to give students studying for the NCLEX.



that's me on the left!

First, breathe.

Tons of students stress out over the complexity of the Next Gen NCLEX update. I get it - there's no question that those cases and bowtie questions are intimidating. **But here's the thing that's so great about the NGN:** the NCLEX has graduated from asking you to memorize every little detail and moved on to **instead testing your ability to think like a nurse.**

This means that you need to change the way you study to match. **To pass the Next Gen NCLEX, the #1 thing you need to do is practice thinking like a nurse.** This is why every one of our NGN cases includes an expert nurse walkthrough **showing you step-by-step how to actually think like a nurse.**

At the end of the day, when it comes down to "how to pass the Next Gen NCLEX," the answer is **practice, practice, practice.** When you're answering practice questions and cases, what you're actually doing is **practicing making the same decisions you'll soon be making as an RN!** Getting the most out of that practice means applying the principles in this guide and being intentional and focused when you answer practice questions.

Happy studying, future RN!

Dr. Emily & the NCLEX Bootcamp Team
Rush University, Doctor of Nursing Sciences

Join our NCLEX Study Group

https://www.facebook.com/groups/nclexbootcampstudentgroup

This study group is an extremely valuable **resource** while you study for the NCLEX. I recommend signing up for two reasons: First, if you ever have a question on a specific concept, practice problem, or something about the NCLEX, it's very likely that someone on there will **help you out.**

Second, you can help out other people with their questions. You remember 10% of what you read, but 90% of what you **teach.** Even if you don't know the answer to someone's question, look it up and explain it to them. You'll learn something new, it'll stick with you for a long time, and you will have actually helped someone else out.

Subscribe to our NCLEX Question of the Day

https://bootcamp.com/nclex/question-of-the-day

Get a new NCLEX question sent straight to your inbox, every morning. It's completely free to join and is a great way to keep your mind sharp for the NCLEX.

Every question you see on the NCLEX Question of the Day is a question pulled randomly from our standalone NCLEX question bank.

"What is Next Gen NCLEX (NGN)?"

The NGN is a new and improved version of the NCLEX! The NGN is meant to be a better representation of nursing practice than the "old NCLEX" and now has a greater emphasis on **applying clinical judgment** instead of just regurgitating memorized facts.

The NGN looks and feels different from the conventional NCLEX in several ways:

- You'll now see **case studies** - there are three, six-item case studies on every exam.

- There are multiple **new item types**, including drop-down, matrix, highlight, bowtie, etc.

- All select-all-that-apply questions are scored using **partial credit!** So if you answer 1 of the 10 options incorrectly, you still score 9/10 on the question instead of being scored a 0%. This is good news for test takers.

- Normal lab value ranges are given to you! You'll always be able to look these up at the bedside in the real world, so you can forget about memorizing the numbers. Just know the meaning.

So far, students who have taken both the old and repeated with the NGN NCLEX are reporting that the NGN "feels easier!"

"When should I take the NCLEX?"

The short answer: when you feel ready! But don't wait too long after you graduate, if possible, so that the information still feels fresh. We encourage most students to spend at least 90 days (3 months) of dedicated review and practice.

The most important thing to do to prepare for the big day is to **practice like it's the real thing.** You can do content review all you want, but until you know how to sit down and use that knowledge to answer actual test questions, it won't be nearly as useful to you as **practice** will be.

"Any advice for retaking the NCLEX?"

There are many students who retake the NCLEX and pass. We suggest doing **two major things** when you are remediating to retake the NCLEX:

1. **Be honest** about what went wrong and which area you're weakest in:

    a. If you didn't recognize what most of the questions were even trying to ask you about, then you may need to review **content**. We build a rich content review into every single explanation. Spend your time really reviewing this content until you understand it well enough to teach it to someone else.

    b. Did you "know your stuff," but you have test anxiety? Do you feel like you're constantly "reading the question wrong?" Then you may need to specifically review some **strategies** from our NGN Strategy Course. Take your time, breathe, and be sure you get PLENTY of practice with our question bank, so that the NCLEX will feel very comfortable to you, like just another Bootcamp practice test.

2. **Review your Candidate Performance Report (CPR).** Were you below passing in:

Candidate Performance Report	Test Bank Subject
Management of Care	Management of Care
Safety and Infection Control	Fundamentals
Basic Care and Comfort	
Psychosocial Integrity	Mental Health
Pharmacologic and Parenteral Therapies	Pharmacology
Clinical Judgment	NGN Case Studies
Health Promotion and	Each of these areas is a mixed bag and

Maintenance	covers multiple content areas. We recommend completing an 85-question test from **Adult**, **Child**, and **Maternal Health** and spending time where you scored lowest.
Reduction of Risk Potential	
Physiologic Adaptation	

"How do I register to take the NCLEX?"

Registering for the NCLEX: https://www.nclex.com/register.page

Be sure to follow the steps exactly as specified on the NCSBN's website. Read the entire NCLEX candidate registration process so that you don't run into any trouble on test day. Be sure to register for the test early – seats tend to fill up fast.

Exam Day Reminders: https://www.nclex.com/exam-day.page

Read over this checklist so you know what to expect for exam day

- **Dress comfortably:** Hats, scarves, gloves, and outerwear are to be left outside of the testing room. Provisions are made for religious/cultural dress.

- **Arrive early:** Arrive at the test center at least 30 minutes before testing time. If more than 30 minutes late, candidates may be required to forfeit the appointment and to re-register and pay another exam fee.

- **Provide your biometrics:** Signature, photograph, and palm vein scan are required before being admitted to test.

- **Provided materials:** An on-screen calculator and erasable note board/marker for making notes will be provided.

- **Set your pace:** Candidates have five hours to complete the NCLEX, including breaks. Take time to analyze each question carefully—once a response is submitted, candidates cannot return to that question.

- **Finishing up:** The test will end with a short survey. Afterward, candidates should raise their hands and wait for the test administrator to dismiss them.

"How much does it cost to take the NCLEX?"

To take the NCLEX, candidates seeking licensure in the United States are required to pay a one-time registration fee of $200 USD. Candidates seeking licensure in Canada will similarly need to pay a one-time fee of $360 CAD.

An additional $50 fee may apply if candidates wish to update their regulatory body (NRB), or board of nursing (BON), after registration.

Please visit the NCSBN website for more information about additional fees: https://www.nclex.com/fees-payment.page

"Should I self-study or take a test prep course?"

Here's the thing: the NCLEX is a weird test. There are a lot of misconceptions out there, so what your textbooks emphasize may or may not align with what is **actually** on the test. We really recommend you structure your study according to a practice bank that is based on the NCLEX Test Plan because this is the ultimate authority for what goes on the test.

You can certainly try to engage in self-study, but this will take much more time than the average test taker is able to dedicate, even if you DO have access to more than one textbook for every subject area and you understand the test plan as well as an expert does. **We recommend you follow our 1, 2, or 3-Month Study Schedules for the best results.**

"How does CAT work to determine if I pass?"

NCLEX is scored as pass/fail using computerized adaptive testing.

Unlike other standardized tests, you don't need to answer X number of questions correctly in order to pass the NCLEX. Instead, you just need to demonstrate that your ability level is above a specific **"passing standard"** that represents the minimum competency to become a safe nurse. So it works like this:

1. The **first question** on your test will be at approximately **the passing standard level** of difficulty.

2. If you answer it **correctly** (or with a high score), you get a **harder** question next. If you answer it **incorrectly** (or with a low score), you get an **easier** question next. Each time you answer a question, the test estimates your ability level.

3. The test continues like this, and each question you answer makes the estimate more accurate. The test ends when the estimate is accurate enough to decide with **95% confidence that you are above or below the passing standard,** you run out of time, or you complete the maximum number of questions.

This means that you can miss almost 50% of the questions on your test and still pass, as long as you stay above the passing standard.

So don't worry so much about having a high percentage of questions correct. **Focus on practicing questions that are at a higher difficulty level,** because those are the questions you will need to answer (mostly) correctly in order to pass.

"What's the length of the NCLEX?"

The test is between **85 and 150 questions,** depending on how close or far you are from the passing standard (see the previous question).

Everyone's test is at least 85 questions long, and 18 of those questions are found within case studies. If your test is longer than 85 questions, you will start to see **"Bowtie"** and **"Trend"** specialty items - up to roughly **7 total Bowtie and Trend items on a full-length, 150-question test.**

Minimum Length	Maximum Length
85 questions	150 questions
15 unscored test items	15 unscored test items
3 Next Gen cases (18 items)	3 Next Gen cases (18 items)
52 stand-alone items	117 stand-alone items
No "Clinical Judgment" stand-alone items	After the first 52 stand-alone items, ~10% of the remaining stand-alone items are "Clinical Judgment" items

So an 85-question test looks like this:

- 15 unscored test items
- 3 NGN cases
- 52 standalone items of any item type except Bowtie or Trend

And a 150-question test looks like this:

- 15 unscored test items
- 3 NGN cases
- 117 stand-alone items of any item type, including ~7 that are Bowtie or Trend

"What do I need to pass the NCLEX?"

The **#1 most important thing you need is practice.** The NCLEX tests your **clinical judgment ability.** And, like other skills, the only way to become an expert at clinical judgment is to **practice, practice, practice.**

You can study every single medication in your pharm book, but unless you know how to **apply** that knowledge in an NCLEX-style question, then the knowledge alone won't help you pass. If you practice often (and correctly!), then you will be a pro at answering NCLEX questions. **The key is to spend a little time practicing every single day.**

Based on the highest-quality evidence about learning in nursing, we now know that your practice questions and sessions should meet **two major criteria:**

1. **Your practice should resemble the real NCLEX as much as possible.** This is according to a learning principle called "transfer-appropriate processing." The closer your practice is to the real test, the more that practice is going to help you perform on the test.

   At Bootcamp, we stress over every single detail to make our question bank look **identical to the real test.** Not only do our questions come straight off of the **official NCLEX test plan,** but even the **testing software looks identical.** We strongly recommend that you answer every question with the same intensity and care as if you are answering a question on your real NCLEX - this helps you practice the "test day" mindset.

2. **Review and incorporate feedback as you go.** Review both the correct AND incorrect answer **rationales** in every explanation. And review your **performance** over time to identify the areas you need to improve.

4 Simple Tips to Improve your NCLEX Score

1. **Follow a study schedule** that outlines what you need to do day-by-day, and stick to it. Feel free to adjust and change it based on what you think you need to study most.

2. **Take regular breaks.** Try to study for 45 minutes, and then take a break for 5-10 minutes. Take off at least one day a week to relax so you don't burn out.

3. **Give yourself enough time.** It's tempting to try to just get the test done when you have other things on your plate (care plans, anyone?). When in doubt, it's better to start early and give yourself more time than less.

4. **Spend your time wisely.** Nursing education tends to contain a lot of "nice to know" information. Focus on the "must-know" information. This is what you'll see on the NCLEX, so it's what we aim to cover in our bank.

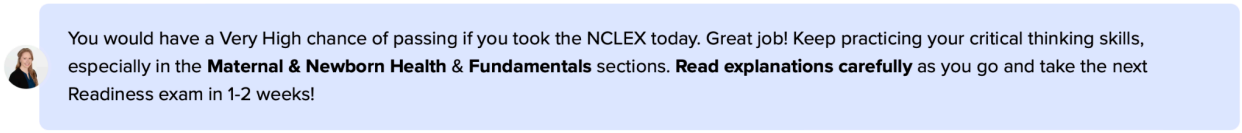
How to Use Bootcamp's Readiness Self-Assessments

All NCLEX Bootcamp subscriptions include **4 full-length readiness tests** that predict your likelihood of passing the NCLEX as either **Low, Borderline, High, or Very High**.

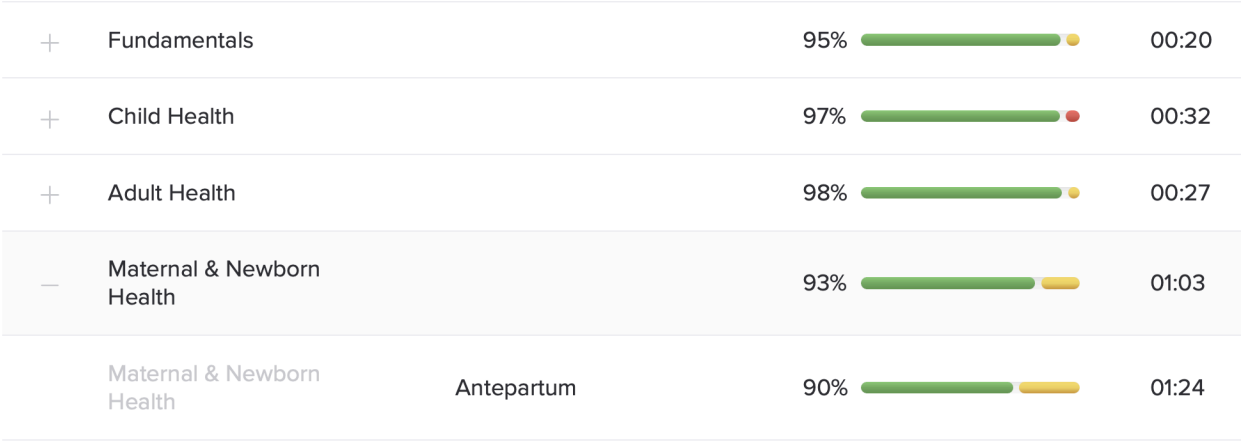


We recommend gauging your progress by **taking one readiness test every 1-3 weeks**, depending on which Study Schedule you choose to follow.

After completing each readiness test, you will receive **personalized recommendations** to review your subject areas with the **greatest room for improvement**.



On the Exam Review page, review your strong and weak subject areas from within the Subject Breakdown. Read rationales and watch case walkthrough videos from within the Question Breakdown.



How to Use the Tagging System on Bootcamp

NCLEX Bootcamp uses a **question tagging system** where you can rate how well you understand a question during review.

By tagging your questions, you can mark which questions you want to revisit to review later.

I strongly encourage you to **tag your questions** as you work through NCLEX Bootcamp. You'll avoid wasting time reviewing things you already know. Your review time is vital to learning the material for the NCLEX.



If you answer a question and get it correct, skim the explanation to verify you got it correct for the right reasons. Tag it as **Mastered** if you feel confident in answering questions like that.

If you answer a question and the information in the explanation is a bit fuzzy to you and could benefit from a second review, tag it as **Reviewing**.

If you get completely blindsided by a question and need to review it again, tag it as **Learning**. Review the relevant explanation and fill in the gaps of knowledge.

Essential Materials and Strongly Recommended Materials

☐ **NCLEX Bootcamp Membership**

- **1 Month of Access** is a good option for new grads who have a solid grasp on clinical concepts, looking to condense their studying into 1 month.
- **3 Months of Access** is our most popular and is a great option for students who want to take their time and ensure they pass on the first attempt.
- **6 Months of Access** is the best option for students who have been out of nursing school for some while and need a little extra time to get back into it.

All options come with the full suite of NCLEX Bootcamp resources including the **study schedule, strategy course, case studies, standalone questions, readiness self-assessment exams, performance tracking**, and much more.

☐ NCSBN Case Study Examples (FREE)

Try out the NCSBN's case study examples so you can see how closely they resemble Bootcamp's to make the most out of your studying.

☐ NCSBN NCLEX FAQs

Read up on the NCLEX FAQs to get answers to questions you didn't even know you had.

Additional Resources

☐ NCSBN NCLEX-RN Test Plan

Be sure to reference the NCSBN's Test Plan for the new NCLEX if you have any specific questions about content.

NCLEX Section Breakdown

What determines whether a subject is covered on the NCLEX or not? The Test Plan is based on the **frequency** and **importance** of various nursing activities and how much the activity relies on **clinical judgment.** (See the NCSBN Clinical Judgement Measurement Model.)

Here's an approximate test plan breakdown by **Client Need Area:**

- **Safe and Effective Care Environment**
    - **18% - Management of Care:** Prioritization, delegation, assignment, and other general principles of management such as conflict resolution and informed consent.
    - **13% - Safety and Infection Control:** Isolation precautions, restraints, and safety principles related to preventing injury, errors, and accidents.
- **9% - Health Promotion and Maintenance:** Stuff to stay healthy, such as dietary teaching, vaccinations, screening, developmental milestones, the normal processes of pregnancy and labor, etc.
- **9% - Psychosocial Integrity:** Therapeutic communication, coping strategies, culturally competent care, etc.
- **Physiological Integrity**
    - **9% - Basic Care and Comfort:** Focus on mobility, positioning, hygiene, elimination, nutrition, etc.
    - **16% - Pharmacological and Parenteral Therapies:** Safe administration of medications, IV fluids, blood, TPN, etc.
    - **12% - Reduction of Risk Potential:** Preventing complications such as pressure injuries, falls, aspiration, and the ability to recognize if a client is

developing a complication from a procedure or disease.

- **14% - Physiological Adaptation:** The most general section on the test focusing on any aspect of the ADPIE nursing process for various diseases.

2024 NCLEX Study Schedules

CLICK HERE TO CONTINUE TO THE STUDY SCHEDULES