



NATIONAL ESTHETICS  
THEORY EXAMINATION

CANDIDATE INFORMATION BULLETIN

*Please visit your examination provider's website for the most current bulletin prior to testing.*

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The National Esthetics Theory Examination is the licensure examination for Estheticians, which is developed by the National-Interstate Council of State Boards of Cosmetology (NIC). This bulletin contains **IMPORTANT INFORMATION** regarding the examination, including content outline covered by the theory examination, sample questions and answers, and references. The time allowed for the Esthetics Theory Examination is 90 minutes.

**PLEASE REVIEW ALL INFORMATION CAREFULLY.**

**IMPORTANT INSTRUCTIONS**

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- Do not leave the examination area without permission. Permission must be obtained to leave the examination area for any reason, including restroom usage or at the completion of the examination. Picture ID is required for re-entry into examination.
- With the exception of verbal instructions, the proctors and examination administration personnel are not allowed to communicate with candidates.
- If you have an emergency situation please notify the proctor.
- The following provides examples of materials and actions that are prohibited during the examination administration:
  - Possession of cellular phones, watches (of any kind), pagers, tablets, computers, projectors, cameras, or any other electronic or recording devices, printed materials, or handwritten notes.
  - Communicating to other candidates.
  - Exhibiting disruptive behavior.
    - *The above referenced items or actions are not an exhaustive list. Failure to comply with any of these conditions or exhibiting ANY behavior that suggests an effort to cheat will result in your immediate dismissal from the examination and your actions reported to the proper authorities.*

**ESTHETICS THEORY EXAMINATION CONTENT OUTLINE**

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1. **SCIENTIFIC CONCEPTS (55%)**
  - A. Apply knowledge of infection control procedures related to:
    1. Microbiology
      - a. Bacteria
      - b. Viruses
      - c. Parasites
      - d. Fungi
    2. Infection control
      - a. Levels of infection control
        - i. Cleaning and Sanitation
        - ii. Disinfection
        - iii. Sterilization
      - b. Methods of infection control
        - i. Heat
        - ii. Chemical Agents
    3. Safety procedures and guidelines
      - b. Blood exposure/contact

- B. Demonstrate an understanding of basic knowledge of human physiology and anatomy related to:
  - 1. Cells
    - a. Structure
    - b. Growth and reproduction
  - 2. Tissues
    - a. Epithelial
    - b. Connective
    - c. Nerve
    - d. Muscular
  - 3. Organs and their function (e.g. skin, lungs, heart)
  - 4. Systems and their functions (e.g., muscular, integumentary, nervous)
  
- C. Demonstrate an understanding of histology and physiology of the skin related to:
  - 1. Structure and function of the layers of the skin
  - 2. Structure and function of the glands
  - 3. Structure of the hair follicle
  - 4. Functions of the skin (e.g., protection, temperature regulation, absorption)
  
- D. Demonstrate an understanding of skin disorders and diseases related to:
  - 1. Disorders of the sebaceous gland (e.g., acne, millia, seborrhea)
  - 2. Disorders of the sudoriferous gland (e.g., hyperhidrosis, bromhidrosis, anhidrosis)
  - 3. Contagious diseases (e.g., bacterial conjunctivitis, herpes simplex, tinea)
  - 4. Skin inflammations (e.g., dermatitis, eczema, rosacea)
  - 5. Skin pigmentation (e.g., hyperpigmentation, hypopigmentation)
  - 6. Skin growths (e.g., verruca, moles, keratoma)
  - 7. Skin cancers (e.g., basal cell carcinoma, squamous cell carcinoma, malignant melanoma)
  - 8. Skin lesions (e.g., keloid, scars, ulcers)
  
- E. Understand composition of body hair related to:
  - 1. Structure and growth of hair
  - 2. Abnormal hair growth (e.g., hirsutism, hypertrichosis)
  
- F. Demonstrate an understanding of basic chemistry including the composition and purpose of cosmetic products related to:
  - 1. Ingredients (e.g., peptides, humectants)
  - 2. Labeling
  - 3. Function (e.g., hydration, protection, cleanse)
  - 4. Acidity/Alkalinity (i.e., pH)

**2. SKIN CARE AND SERVICES (45%)**

- A. Demonstrate an understanding of performing a client consultation and documentation related to:
  - 1. Skin analysis
    - a. Fitzpatrick scale
    - b. Skin type
    - c. Skin condition
  - 2. Client records (e.g., health history, intake form, consultation chart)
  - 3. Treatment protocol
  - 4. Contraindications for skin services
  
- B. Demonstrate an understanding of cleansing procedures
  
- C. Demonstrate an understanding of steaming procedures (i.e., towel and steamer/vaporizer)
  
- D. Demonstrate an understanding of exfoliation procedures related to:
  - 1. Chemical (e.g., AHA, BHA, enzymes)
  - 2. Physical (e.g., scrubs, brushing, microdermabrasion)
  - 3. Gommage

- E. Demonstrate an understanding of extraction procedures
- F. Demonstrate an understanding of massage movements and effects
- G. Demonstrate an understanding of the use of masks related to:
  - 1. Clay/Mud
  - 2. Gel
  - 3. Rubberized
  - 4. Cream
- H. Demonstrate an understanding of hair removal methods and procedures related to:
  - 1. Waxing (i.e., hard and soft)
  - 2. Tweezing
- I. Demonstrate an understanding of principles of and procedures for makeup application related to:
  - 1. Analysis of face shapes and features
  - 2. Color theory
  - 3. Applications
- J. Demonstrate a knowledge of the use of electrical equipment during skin services related to:
  - 1. Magnifying lamp
  - 2. Wood's lamp
  - 3. Facial steamer/vaporizer
  - 4. High frequency machine
  - 5. LED therapy
  - 6. Microdermabrasion
  - 7. Microcurrent
- K. Demonstrate a basic knowledge of other services related to:
  - 1. Body treatments
  - 2. Eyelash extensions

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### ESTHETICS SAMPLE QUESTIONS

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The following sample questions are similar to those on the NIC Esthetics Theory Examination. Each question is followed by four answer options. Only one option is correct. Correct answers (keys) are listed following the sample questions.

- 1. What is the term for the scientific study of the skin?
  - a. Myology
  - b. Angiology
  - c. Physiology
  - d. Dermatology
- 2. A product containing antiseptic reaches what level of decontamination?
  - a. Disinfection
  - b. Sterilization
  - c. Ionization
  - d. Sanitation
- 3. Which of the following is also referred to as the basal layer?
  - a. Stratum granulosum
  - b. Stratum lucidum
  - c. Stratum germinativum
  - d. Stratum corneum

4. During the anagen phase of hair growth, the hair is
  - a. beginning to destroy itself.
  - b. actively growing.
  - c. shedding.
  - d. disconnecting from the papilla.
  
5. A new client schedules for a series of chemical exfoliation treatments. When should the consultation form be reviewed and signed?
  - a. Monthly
  - b. Annually
  - c. At the first treatment
  - d. At each treatment
  
6. Dilated capillaries that can be seen beneath the surface of the skin are known as
  - a. seborrhea.
  - b. keratoma.
  - c. telangectasia.
  - d. dehydrated.
  
7. Melanocytes that are more active will produce
  - a. lighter skin.
  - b. darker skin.
  - c. sebaceous skin.
  - d. dry skin.
  
8. In addition to softening sebum, another function of a facial steamer is to
  - a. oxygenate the skin.
  - b. moisturize the skin.
  - c. decrease circulation.
  - d. detoxify the skin.

**Answers**

- |      |      |      |      |
|------|------|------|------|
| 1. d | 3. c | 5. d | 7. b |
| 2. d | 4. b | 6. c | 8. a |

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**ESTHETICS REFERENCES**

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**PRIMARY REFERENCES**

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*Milady's Standard Esthetics: Fundamentals*  
2013, 11<sup>th</sup> Edition  
Joel Gerson, Janet D'Angelo, Sallie Deitz et al  
Milady  
5 Maxwell Drive  
Clifton Park NY 12065-2919  
[www.milady.cengage.com](http://www.milady.cengage.com)

*Salon Fundamentals Esthetics – A Resource for Your Skin Care Career*

2007, 11<sup>th</sup> printing, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, August 2013

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*NIC Infection Control and Safety Standards*

Adopted 1998; Revised October 2002, Revised August 2014

National-Interstate Council of State Boards of Cosmetology

[http://nictesting.org/memberinfo/NIC Health & Safety Standards- Aug 2014.pdf](http://nictesting.org/memberinfo/NIC_Health_&_Safety_Standards- Aug 2014.pdf)

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**SUPPORTING REFERENCES**

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*Salon Fundamentals Esthetics – A Resource for Your Skin Care Career*

2007, 10<sup>th</sup> printing, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, September 2012

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2007, 7<sup>th</sup> printing, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, February 2011

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