

National Esthetics Theory Examination CIB

National-Interstate Council of State Boards of Cosmetology (NIC)

Effective Date: January 1, 2027

Contents

CANDIDATE INFORMATION BULLETIN (CIB) 3
IMPORTANT INSTRUCTIONS 4
General 4
Standardized Administration 4
Prohibited Items 4
ESTHETICS THEORY EXAMINATION CONTENT OUTLINE . . . 6
Domain Details 6
NATIONAL ESTHETICS THEORY EXAMINATION SAMPLE QUESTIONS 10
NATIONAL-INTERSTATE COUNCIL OF STATE BOARDS OF COSMETOLOGY (NIC) REFERENCES 12
Standard 12
Supplemental 12

CANDIDATE INFORMATION BULLETIN (CIB)

EXAMINATION CONTENT AND IMPORTANT INSTRUCTIONS

Please visit your official examination provider website OR www.nictesting.org for the most current bulletin prior to testing.

The National Esthetics Theory Examination is a licensure examination for Esthetics, developed by the National-Interstate Council of State Boards of Cosmetology (NIC).

This bulletin contains IMPORTANT INFORMATION regarding National Esthetics Theory Examination content and references.

The time allowed for this examination is 90 minutes.

PLEASE REVIEW ALL INFORMATION CAREFULLY.

For each NIC National Theory Examination, there are multiple parts to every Candidate Information Bulletin (CIB):

- **Important Instructions and Examination Content Domain Sections** – This provides information and guidelines related to administration of the Theory examination and information about the scope of content covered in the examination.
- **References** – This provides a list of references used to develop and support the content covered in NIC examinations. References will be the same for Theory, Practical, Written Practical, and Additional Sections for each exam.

BE CERTAIN TO REVIEW ALL PARTS OF THIS NIC EXAMINATION CIB CAREFULLY!

IMPORTANT INSTRUCTIONS

General

- 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 the examination.*
- All examinations are administered in a testing environment.

Standardized Administration

Due to standardization of the NIC National Examinations, proctors and examiners are required to adhere to the following standards:

- With the exception of verbal instructions, proctors and examination administration personnel are NOT allowed to speak with candidates.
- If a candidate experiences an emergency situation, they may notify the proctor by raising their hand.

Prohibited Items

- The following provides examples of materials and actions that are prohibited in the examination room 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.

  - Purses, bags, coats, hats, and any other personal items not directly needed to complete the examination, are not allowed.

- Communicating to other candidates or any examiner.
- 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 immediate dismissal from the examination and the candidates' actions reported to the proper authorities.

ESTHETICS THEORY EXAMINATION CONTENT OUTLINE

Domain Details

The following outlines the scope of content covered by the NIC National Esthetics Theory Examination. The percentages represent the percentage of items from each domain. The examination contains 110 items, of which 100 items are weighted and contribute to the candidate's final score.

I. SCIENTIFIC CONCEPTS (55%)

- A. Basic knowledge of microbiology (i.e., bacteria, viruses, parasites, fungi)
- B. Apply knowledge of infection control procedures related to:
  1. Levels of infection control (i.e., sanitation, disinfection, sterilization)
  2. Methods of infection control (i.e., heat, chemical agents)
- C. Apply knowledge of safety procedures and guidelines related to:
  1. Standard (Universal) Precautions
  2. Blood exposure procedures
  3. Safety Data Sheets (SDS) (e.g., manufacturer's labeling)
  4. Handling of chemicals
- D. Demonstrate a basic understanding of human physiology and anatomy related to:
  1. Cells and their functions
  2. Tissues (i.e., epithelial, connective, nerve, muscular)
  3. Organs and their function (e.g., skin, lungs, heart)
  4. Systems and their functions (e.g., muscular, integumentary, nervous, endocrine, skeletal)

E. 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. Functions of the skin (e.g., protection, temperature regulation, absorption)

F. Recognize and understand skin disorders and diseases related to:
   1. Disorders of the sebaceous gland (e.g., acne, milia, seborrhea)
   2. Disorders of the sudoriferous gland (e.g., hyperhidrosis, bromhydrosis, anhidrosis)
   3. Contagious diseases (e.g., bacterial conjunctivitis, herpes simplex, tinea)
   4. Skin inflammations (e.g., dermatitis, eczema, rosacea)
   5. Skin pigmentation (i.e., hyperpigmentation, hypopigmentation)
   6. Skin growths (e.g., skin tags, moles, keratoma)
   7. Skin cancers (i.e., basal cell carcinoma, squamous cell carcinoma, melanoma)
   8. Primary and secondary skin lesions

G. Understanding function and composition of the hair related to:
   1. Structure of the hair and its follicle
   2. Growth cycles
   3. Abnormal hair growth (e.g., hirsutism, hypertrichosis)

H. Understanding basic chemistry as related to:
   1. Ingredients
   2. Labeling
   3. Function (e.g., hydration, protection, cleanse)
   4. Acidity/Alkalinity (i.e., pH)

II. SKIN CARE AND SERVICES (45%)

A. Demonstrate an understanding of performing a client consultation and documentation (e.g., health history, intake form, consultation chart, physician release)

1. Apply knowledge of client protection (i.e., draping of head and body)

2. Skin analysis (e.g., Fitzpatrick skin types/conditions/characteristics)

3. Contraindications for skin services

4. Treatment protocol

B. Demonstrate an understanding of basic facial procedures

C. Demonstrate an understanding of cleansing procedures

D. Demonstrate an understanding of steaming procedures

E. Demonstrate an understanding of exfoliation procedures (i.e., chemical, mechanical/manual)

F. Demonstrate a basic understanding of massage movements

G. Demonstrate an understanding of methods of extraction

H. Demonstrate an understanding of the functions and applications of masks related to clay/mud (e.g., cream, gel, clay/mud)

I. Demonstrate an understanding of the conclusion of facial services:

1. Treat/moisturize (e.g., treatment cream, serum)

2. Sun protection

3. Home care (i.e., after care)

J. Demonstrate a basic knowledge of the use of electrical equipment used in skin services

K. Demonstrate an understanding of makeup as related to:

1. Principles (e.g., color theory)

2. Product selection (e.g., lipstick, foundation)

3. Application (e.g., contouring, highlighting, blending)

4. Safety (e.g., bracing)

5. Infection control (e.g., disposables, disinfection of tools)

L. Demonstrate a basic knowledge of other services related to:

1. Facial services (e.g., aromatherapy, pre- and post-surgical/medical treatments, ultrasonic)

2. Body treatments (body wraps, body scrubs, sunless tanning)

3. Eyelash and eyebrow services (e.g., lash and brow tinting, artificial lashes, lash lifting/perming)

4. Demonstrate an understanding of hair removal methods and procedures (i.e., waxing, tweezing)

5. Wellness programs

M. Demonstrates basic knowledge of advanced topics and treatments (e.g., dermaplaning, nano infusion, microdermabrasion)

NATIONAL ESTHETICS THEORY EXAMINATION SAMPLE QUESTIONS

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

   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.

Table 1: Answer Key

Item	Key
1	D
2	D
3	C
4	B
5	D
6	C
7	B
8	A

Copyrighted NIC, Effective 2027

NATIONAL-INTERSTATE COUNCIL OF STATE BOARDS OF COSMETOLOGY (NIC) REFERENCES

This list provides the references used to develop and support the content covered in the NIC National Esthetics examinations. References will be the same across exam types for each exam. Candidates are responsible for using these most updated versions of references, as these editions were used to reference test material.

Reference Date: March 01, 2026

Standard

Milady Standard Esthetics Fundamentals and Foundations (2-book set)
Copyrighted Foundations 2020,
12th Edition
ISBN: 9780357263792
Milady www.Milady.com
Contact: Info@Milady.com;

Pivot Point Fundamentals: Esthetics, (101E – 111E)
Copyrighted ©2022 Pivot Point International, Inc.
1st Edition, 3rd Printing, September 2022
ISBN 978-1-951862-26-8
Pivot Point International, Inc. https://www.pivot-point.com/shop/
Contact: info@pivot-point.com; 847-886-0500

Supplemental

Milady Standard Advanced Esthetics
Copyrighted 2026

3rd Edition

9780357873069

Milady www.Milady.com

Info@Milady.com;

Milady Standard Advanced Esthetics

Copyrighted 2013

2013, 2nd Edition

ISBN: 9781111139094

Milady www.Milady.com

Contact: Info@Milady.com;

The Epidermal Cell Therapy Skillsbook

Copyrighted 2015

Author: L. Saphonia Gee, L.M.E., CIDESCO Diplomat L. Saphonia Gee

Copyright 2026 National-Interstate Council of State Boards of Cosmetology, Inc.