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## **Adult/Paediatric NP Exam Frequently Asked Questions from Canadian Universities**

This document provides information to Canadian universities about the *American Academy of Nurse Practitioners Certification Board's* (AANPCB's) Adult-Gerontology Primary Care Nurse Practitioner Exam, and the *Pediatric Nursing Certification Board's* (PNCB's) Pediatric Primary Care Nurse Practitioner Exam, which are used for licensing/registration purposes in Canada. All references to "exams" in this document are limited to these two exams. For information that is provided to Canadian candidates about these exams, please see the fact sheets available at: [www.ccrnr.ca](http://www.ccrnr.ca).

### **1. On which competencies are these exams based?**

AANPCB's exam is based on the [Adult-Gerontology Primary Care Nurse Practitioner Competencies \(2010\)](#). These competencies are published by the American Association of Colleges of Nursing and were developed in collaboration with the Hartford Institute for Geriatric Nursing at New York University and the U.S. National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties.

PNCB's exam is based on the [Population Focused Nurse Practitioner Competencies 2013 \(Pediatric Primary Care\)](#). These competencies were produced by a multi-stakeholder task force formed through the U.S. National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties.

Both exams are consistent with the U.S. [Consensus Model for Advanced Practice Registered Nurses: Licensure, Accreditation, Certification and Education \(2008\)](#).

### **2. How did the Canadian Council of RN Regulators (CCRNRR) decide to use these exams for NP licensure/registration purposes?**

Both exams were reviewed by CCRNR to ensure that they meet psychometric standards for a valid, reliable, and fair licensure/registration exam.

Content-validity was determined through a comparison of the practice analysis studies and exam content outlines with the [Canadian Nurse Practitioner Core Competency Framework](#) (Canadian Nurses Association, 2010).

Both exams address the competencies expected of entry-level NPs in Canada, with an emphasis on the clinical competencies – assessment, diagnosis and therapeutic management of clients - required for safe, effective and ethical NP practice.

### **3. Where can we access information about these exams?**

Both [AANPCB](#) and [PNCB](#) provide extensive information on their websites about exam development and administration processes, exam content outlines, and preparatory resources.

### **4. Is the "adult-gerontology" exam the same as an "adult" exam?**

Yes, they are the same. Previously, Adult and Gerontology were considered two separate categories in the U.S. They were merged as a result of the U.S. [Consensus Model for Advanced Practice Registered Nurses: Licensure, Accreditation, Certification and Education \(2008\)](#). Since January 2013, AANPCB has offered this exam, which incorporates content relevant to a population from late adolescents to older adults (e.g., gerontology).

In Canada, the Adult stream regulated by Canadian RN regulators always included the older adult population.

**5. What information do AANPCB and PNCB require from universities about NP curricula?**

Canadian universities currently offering adult NP programs have submitted information, through the applicable RN regulatory body, to AANPCB about their curricula. This included contact information for the university's NP education program, course descriptions for NP-specific courses, and the total number of clinical hours. Beginning in 2015, AANPCB will contact the university official directly to request annual confirmation and, if applicable, updates to the university's information (e.g., if curricula changes).

The University of Toronto's Master of Nursing-Nurse Practitioner, and Post-Master's-Nurse Practitioner programs for paediatrics is currently approved by PNCB for this exam. Any Canadian university planning to introduce a new pediatric NP education program should consult the applicable RN regulatory body. If appropriate, the regulator will provide information about PNCB's requirements at that time.

The information that Canadian universities send to exam providers is used to facilitate Canadian graduates' access to these exams. This is separate from any information that may be requested by a Canadian RN regulatory body for approving / recognizing NP education programs. Please contact the applicable regulator if you have questions about its program approval / recognition requirements.

**6. Many of our students do clinical placements in the hospital sector. Are these placements accepted for primary care exams?**

The AANPCB and PNCB exams are based on the U.S. [Consensus Model for Advanced Practice Registered Nurses: Licensure, Accreditation, Certification and Education \(2008\)](#) and National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties' interpretation of primary and acute care, which are based on client care needs, not the practice setting where care is provided. In Canada, these terms are typically used to describe practice sectors.

For the purpose of these exams, primary care addresses comprehensive, chronic or continuous care for a stable client. Primary care is provided in a wide-variety of practice settings, including: community, hospitals (in-patient and out-patient settings), long-term-care homes, etc. Acute care is restorative care for unstable, critically ill clients with rapidly changing clinical conditions. Acute care is generally limited to critical care units, cardiac catheterization labs, operating rooms, post-anaesthetic recovery, etc.

Graduates of NP education programs with a primary care focus, or a dual focus (both primary and acute care), are eligible to write these AANPCB and PNCB exams. AANPCB and PNCB require graduates to have at least 500 supervised clinical hours that meet the following two conditions.

- (i) Offers clinical experiences with an appropriate client population:
  - adolescents to older adults for the AANPCB exam; and
  - newborns to older adolescents for the PNCB exam.

and

- (ii) Provides students with comprehensive clinical experiences that allow them to apply competencies in advanced health assessment, diagnosis and therapeutic management. The 500 hours must focus on the therapeutic management of illness, health promotion, and disease

prevention for clients experiencing a range of acute and chronic health conditions. Students whose clinical placements are exclusively in critical care environments may be asked to provide additional clinical placement information and possibly undertake additional time in primary care NP clinical practice. AANPCB may need to contact the university directly if there are questions about the candidate's clinical placement.

The RN regulatory body in your province may have additional requirements for clinical placements (e.g., additional clinical hours, or conditions). Please contact the applicable regulator if you have questions about its program approval / recognition requirements.

### **7. How do graduating students apply to write the exam?**

The Canadian RN regulatory body in your province determines a person's eligibility for licensure/registration as an NP based on established criteria, which includes determining eligibility for writing the exam. Once that eligibility is established by the RN regulator, the graduate will apply directly to AANPCB and PNCB to write these exams.

See the [AANPCB fact sheet](#) and [PNCB fact sheet](#) for information that is provided to Canadian candidates.

### **8. What information do AANPCB and PNCB require from universities about individual candidates?**

Canadian universities are asked to provide letters to AANPCB and PNCB containing the names of those who have successfully completed the Adult or Pediatric NP education program respectively. Letters must be on official university letterhead and signed by the appropriate official.

It is acceptable for universities to send one letter listing the names of all graduating students (e.g., each year at the time of course completion). An individual letter can be provided in situations where a student completes the program at a different time. These exams can be written at any time; therefore, there is no deadline for universities to submit this information.

Universities should contact the RN regulatory body in the applicable province for the contact information for AANPCB and PNCB to receive these letters.

AANPCB and PNCB may request additional information from universities (e.g., transcripts, forms, clinical placement details) about individual candidates on a case by case basis (e.g., if the candidate wishes to obtain certification, if there are questions about clinical placements).

### **9. Are these exams being modified through a Canadian scoring process, similar to what was done in previous years for the adult and pediatric exams?**

No. The exam written by Canadian candidates is the same exam written in other jurisdictions, and is scored the same way for all candidates. CCRNR's review of the AANPCB and PNCB exams found that both exams emphasize the clinical competencies – assessment, diagnosis and therapeutic management of clients - required for safe, effective and ethical NP practice in Canada.

Canadian NPs are identified, through Canadian RN regulatory bodies, to participate in AANPCB's and PNCB's exam development and review activities, which will inform the content of these exams in 2015 and subsequent years.

Because there is no Canadian scoring process, Canadian candidates can schedule to write these exams at any time in the calendar year and will receive their results sooner than in previous years. Applicants

are required to complete a disclosure of information form, which provides AANPCB and PNCB permission to report their results directly the applicable regulator.

Since these exams are not being modified, Canadian candidates who are successful may also qualify for AANPCB or PNCB certification. Refer to [AANPCB](#) and [PNCB](#) websites for information about certification.

**10. We would like to offer continuing education to assist candidates who are unsuccessful in an exam attempt. What do we need to know?**

See the [AANPCB fact sheet](#) and [PNCB fact sheet](#) for information that is provided to Canadian candidates about their remediation requirements.

Canadian universities that plan to offer continuing education to AANPCB candidates should note the requirement that only accredited continuing education hours offered by an accredited continuing education provider will be accepted. Refer to [AANPCB's Candidate Handbook](#) ("retaking the exam") for specifics. Questions about the continuing education accreditation/approval requirement should be directed to AANPCB. Universities can contact the RN regulatory body in the applicable province for the appropriate contact information.

**11. Will universities receive statistical reports about their graduates' performance on these exams?**

Yes, both AANPCB and PNCB provide aggregate reports to universities about their graduating classes' performance.

AANPCB's report will be emailed to the university in the first quarter of each year, starting in 2015. The email is sent to the university contact that is identified in the program information form that was submitted to AANPCB (see question #5). PNCB provides universities access to an online portal to retrieve reports.

The information reported by AANPCB and PNCB includes the:

- number of graduates from the university who have written on a year by year basis;
- pass rate, and number of attempts for graduates to pass the exam; and
- graduating classes' performance, on a year by year basis, on the practice domains tested on the exam, including how these results compare with all other exam candidate writers (this comparison is not limited to Canadian writers).

A university's report is confidential and is not shared with other organizations. Both AANPCB and PNCB have their own privacy policies in respect of aggregate data that they report (e.g., minimum number of writers required before aggregate reports will be released), which are independent of CCRNR and/or Canadian RN regulatory bodies. For further information, please contact AANPCB or PNCB directly.

**12. How does the Canadian NP practice analysis affect exams?**

The CCRNR conducted a Canadian NP practice analysis study to provide a more comprehensive description of the entry-level knowledge, skills and abilities required for NP practice in Canada. The study included NPs in adult, pediatrics and family-all-ages streams of practice.

Following the Canadian jurisdictional consultations, the analysis of the findings revealed that NP practice is consistent across Canada and that NPs use the same competencies in their practice in all Canadian jurisdictions and across the three streams of practice included in this analysis: family/all ages, adult and pediatrics. The NP Practice Analysis was validated by approximately 1,500 NPs across Canada and indicated that the difference in NP practice lies in the patient population needs and context of practice, including age, developmental stage, health condition and complexity of clients. On August 24, 2016 consensus was reached on the final Canadian NP ELC document. For more information about the NP practice analysis go here: <http://ccnr.ca/nurse-practitioners.html>

Given that the NP Practice analysis has resulted in new entry-level NP competencies and the identification of a subset of these competencies for testing purposes, this information was provided to the NPs participating, on CCRNR's behalf, in exam development and review activities for the Adult and Pediatrics exams. The competencies will be used to guide their contributions to the development of the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners Certification Program (AANPCB) - Primary Care Adult-Gerontology Nurse Practitioner Examination and the Pediatric Nursing Certification Board (PNCB) - Primary Care Pediatrics Nurse Practitioner Examination. For more information about the competencies on which these exams are based, go to question #1.