



CLINICAL NURSE LEADERSM
(CNL[®])
CERTIFICATION
EXAMINATION HANDBOOK:

CANDIDATE INFORMATION
GUIDE (November 2009)



The CNL Certification Program is managed by:
Commission on Nurse Certification
One Dupont Circle, NW, Suite 530
Washington, DC, 20036-1120
Phone: (202) 463-6930
Fax: (202) 785-8320
Website: <http://www.aacn.nche.edu/CNC>

CNL[®] CERTIFICATION EXAMINATION HANDBOOK

The *CNL Certification Examination Handbook* provides information essential to the Clinical Nurse Leader (CNL) Certification ExaminationSM process. It is recommended that you keep a copy of the guide until after the examination is completed. Copies may be downloaded from <http://www.aacn.nche.edu/CNC> or by contacting the Commission on Nurse Certification (CNC) at (202) 463-6930. NOTE: Policies and procedures in this handbook are subject to change. Participants of the CNL Certification Program should complete the CNL Certification Program Survey located at the end of this handbook and submit it to CNC following the examination.

For questions regarding the CNL Certification Program, contact:

Tracy Lofty, MSA, CAE
Director
Commission on Nurse Certification
Phone: (202) 463-6930, ext. 242
E-mail: tlofty@aacn.nche.edu

Dana Featherstone
Certification Assistant
Commission on Nurse Certification
Phone: (202) 463-6930, ext. 226
E-mail: dfeatherstone@aacn.nche.edu

Copyright © 2008 by the Commission on Nurse Certification. All rights reserved. Any duplication or reproduction of all or any portion of these materials without the express written permission of the Commission on Nurse Certification is prohibited.

Commission on Nurse Certification (CNC)
2007-2009 Board of Commissioners

Jeri A. Milstead, PhD, RN, FAAN, NEA-BC
(Chair, CNC Board of Commissioners)
University of Toledo (Dean Emerita), Toledo, OH

Terry Beach, RN, MS, CNL
Providence Health Systems, Portland, OR

Jim Begun, PhD,
School of Public Health, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN

Susan R. Hartranft, PhD, ARNP, CNL
Morton Plant Mease Health Care, Clearwater, FL

Phyllis Healy, PhD, RN, BC-FNP
University of Southern Maine, Portland, ME

Traci Hoiting, RN, MS, CNL
Swedish Health System, Seattle, WA

Janis C. Holiwell, RN, MN, CNL, CNS Geriatrics, WOCN
Eastern Kansas Health Care, Topeka, KS

Susan M. Schmidt, PhD, RN, CNS, COHN-S, CNL
Xavier University, Cincinnati, OH

Melissa Vandever, PhD, RN, PNP, CNL
Sonoma State University, Rohnert Park, CA

Tracy Lofty, MSA, CAE
Commission on Nurse Certification, Washington, DC



The CNL[®] Certification Program promotes high quality patient care through the certification of qualified individuals by:

- Recognizing formally those individuals who meet the eligibility requirements of the CNL Certification Program and pass the examination.
- Encouraging continued personal and professional growth in one's practice as a Clinical Nurse Leader (CNL).
- Providing a national standard of requisite knowledge and experiences required for certification - thereby assisting employers, the public and members of the health profession in the assessment of a CNL.

AACN Mission

The American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) is the national voice for baccalaureate and graduate-degree nursing education. A unique asset for the nation, AACN serves the public interest by providing standards and resources, and by fostering innovation to advance professional nursing education, research, and practice.

CNC History and Mission

Established in 2007, CNC is an autonomous arm of AACN responsible for all certification activities. The mission of CNC is to oversee certification activities to promote safe, quality practice thereby assuring communities of interest that certificants have met accepted standards of practice.

History of Clinical Nurse Leader Role

AACN has worked towards meeting a major goal in providing strategic leadership that advances professional nursing education, research and practice through the promotion of innovation in graduate nursing education. The Clinical Nurse Leader (CNL) practice model and role were developed and implemented in collaboration with leaders in nursing education and practice to address the current and future needs of the health care system and most importantly to provide quality patient care outcomes.

Two sequential AACN task forces were convened to identify (1) how to improve the quality of patient care and (2) how to best prepare nurses with the competencies needed to thrive in the current and future health care system. Following extensive investigation and dialogue with multiple stakeholder groups both within and external to nursing, the CNL role emerged as a way to engage highly skilled clinicians in outcomes-based practice, quality improvement and lateral integration of care.

Definition of Clinical Nurse Leader

The CNL is an advanced generalist clinician with education at the master's or post-master's degree level in a formal CNL education program. Graduate education is necessary because the CNL must bring a high level of clinical competence and knowledge to the point of care and serve as a resource for the nursing team. In practice, the CNL oversees the care coordination and integration of care for a distinct group of patients. This master's degree-prepared clinician puts evidence-based practice into action to ensure that patients benefit from the latest innovations in care delivery. The CNL evaluates patient outcomes, assesses cohort risk, and has the decision-making authority to change care plans when necessary. The CNL is a leader and active member of the interdisciplinary health care team. The implementation of the CNL role will vary across health care settings.

Purpose and Benefits of CNL Certification

Certification has national precedence and respect and adheres to the principles of regulation promulgated by the International Council of Nursing and adopted by major nursing organizations and regulators. Certification and recertification provide individuals an opportunity to undertake self-assessment of one's individual competence. In addition, certification provides an opportunity for individuals to reflect on one's practice and establish goals for ongoing professional development and growth.

The purpose of CNL certification is to create a unique credential for graduates of master's and post-master's CNL programs. Candidates who meet all eligibility requirements and pass the CNL Certification Examination will earn the credential of "CNL". Upon earning CNL certification and maintaining an active status, certificants will be listed in an online directory made available to the public.

WHY CERTIFICATION?

Certification is voluntary and serves to:

- Demonstrate a commitment to the profession
- Indicate that an individual has acquired knowledge beyond RN licensure
- Recognize that an individual has demonstrated standards and knowledge of the profession
- Assure the public that the CNL is well prepared for safe practice
- Promote life-long learning through recertification requirements

POLICIES

The applicant must comply with all eligibility and admission policies of the Clinical Nurse Leader Certification Program. Upon completion of the application, the applicant must certify with his/her signature that the information submitted in the application and required documents is complete and correct. If the information submitted is found to be incomplete or inaccurate, the application may be rejected, or examination results may be delayed, not released, or invalidated by the CNC Board of Commissioners.

Policy on the Release of Examination Results

By signing the application form, the applicant acknowledges and agrees that as a condition of taking the CNL examination, the applicant gives irrevocable permission to the AACN to release information about one's examination scores and credentialed status to any entities it believes to be pertinent in its sole discretion, including state agencies, state boards of nursing, specialized nursing accreditation bodies, and the CNL program from which he/she graduated.

In addition, participation in the CNL Certification Examination acknowledges that CNC may also release information in aggregate form regarding the information included on the application, examination scores, and credentialing status for evaluation and reporting purposes. Applicants may be contacted by CNC representatives at a future date regarding optional participation in additional evaluation processes.

Policy on Inactivation of Eligibility Records

The application for the CNL Certification Examination will become INACTIVE if an applicant does not sit for the certification examination during the testing window originally applied for and does not notify the CNC office prior to the original testing date. If a candidate's application is inactivated, the candidate must submit a new application, documentation of eligibility in compliance with the then current admissions requirements, and pay the new applicant fee.

Policy on Expired Certification

Allowing a lapse greater than three months in certification without completing and submitting the necessary documents for recertification will result in automatic nullification of an individual's CNL Certification. The applicant will then be required to submit a new CNL Certification Application and successfully complete the CNL Certification Examination.

Policy on Mailing and Electronic Address Changes

The applicant is responsible for notifying CNC of any change in mailing address **AND** electronic mailing address to receive official notices regarding credentials issued by the CNC. CNC staff shall not be responsible for non-receipt of notices due to the applicant's failure to provide a current mailing address and electronic address.

Nondiscrimination Statement

The CNL Certification Program does not discriminate among candidates on the basis of age, gender, race, color, religion, national origin, disability or marital status.

Compliance with Americans with Disability Act

The CNC complies with the Americans with Disability Act (ADA) in ensuring that individuals with disabilities are not deprived of the opportunity to take the CNL Certification Examination solely by reason of their disabilities. However, since the CNL Certification Examination will be administered at individual schools/institutions, special needs will depend on the disability accommodations at these sites.

Misconduct During Examination and Dismissal From Examination

The following actions by candidates during the examination will constitute misconduct and result in an automatic dismissal from the examination, cancellation of scores, and forfeiture of examination fees:

- Failure to adhere to testing site examination restrictions
- Creating a disturbance, being abusive, or being otherwise uncooperative
- Bringing restricted materials into testing area
- Using electronic communications equipment such as cellular phones, PDA's, or pagers.
- Gaining unauthorized admission into the examination testing area
- Attempting to take the examination for another individual
- Possessing books, notes, or other resources and study aids
- Attempting to remove, or removing scratch paper from the testing site
- Recording or attempting to record examination questions or make notes
- Giving help or receiving help or being suspected of doing so during or after the examination.

Request for Testing Site Changes

Candidates who wish to sit for an examination at a site other than the school or institution from which they graduated from the CNL education program must submit a written request to AACN. Space is provided in the Clinical Nurse Leader Certification Examination Application to request an alternative Examination Location. The request must be received by the CNC office at least two weeks prior to the testing window. CNC staff will attempt to identify an alternative testing site that is geographically located closer to the candidate; however, depending upon where the examination is being administered during a specific testing window this may or may not be possible.

Request for Testing Date Changes

Candidates who wish to change or postpone the scheduled examination date must notify CNC in writing no later than ten business days prior to the scheduled examination date. The candidate must also notify the faculty contact at the school where the examination is to be administered. Candidates who notify CNC less than ten business days prior to the scheduled test date will be charged a \$75 administration fee.

Candidates who fail to notify CNC of a cancellation or test date change (no shows) are required to submit a new application and fee to sit for the exam at a later date.

Examination Withdrawal/Cancellation

Candidates who wish to withdraw from or cancel a scheduled examination appointment must notify CNC in writing no later than one week prior to the scheduled examination date. The candidate must also notify the faculty contact at the school where the examination is to be administered. Candidates who notify CNC at least one week prior to the scheduled test date may request in writing a refund of the application fee minus a \$75 administration fee.

Inclement Weather, Power Failure or Emergency

In the event of inclement weather or unforeseen emergencies on the day of the examination, the faculty contact at the testing institution/school will determine whether circumstances warrant the cancellation, and subsequent rescheduling of the examination. It is the responsibility of candidates to have access to information on emergency closings of their respective institution/school testing sites. In the event that the examination is canceled, the faculty contact must notify all candidates regarding the new examination dates and notify AMP and CNC regarding the rescheduling.

Score Cancellation

CNC and AMP reserve the right to cancel scores if their validity and integrity is compromised. Discrepancies such as computer malfunction or misconduct of a candidate may cause a score to be suspect. CNC and AMP will investigate the occurrence and may cancel or withhold the examination results if a violation of regulations is found.

TESTING AGENCY

The CNC contracts with Applied Measurement Professionals, Inc, (AMP) to assist in the development, administration, scoring, score reporting and analysis of the CNL Certification Examination. AMP is a professional testing agency with over 20 years of experience in designing and developing certification and licensure examination programs. NOTE: CNL certification exams are administered at the schools of nursing and not at an AMP testing center.

Applied Measurement Professionals
18000 W. 105th Street
Olathe, KS 66061-7543
Phone: (913) 895-4600
E-mail: info@goAMP.com
Website: www.goAMP.com

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

The CNL Certification Examination was developed in collaboration with leaders in education and practice to credential graduates of the CNL master's and post-master's degree programs. Only individuals who graduate from a CNL master's or post-master's degree program that was designed based on and prepares individuals with the outcome competencies delineated in the AACN white paper on *The Education and Role of the Clinical Nurse Leader* (2007) are eligible to sit for the examination.

An individual who meets all eligibility requirements and passes the CNL Certification Examination will be awarded full certification and attain the CNL designation. To be eligible to sit for the CNL Certification Examination, a candidate must fulfill all of the following requirements:

1. RN Licensure:

- Hold a current and active, unrestricted professional Registered Nurse License in the United States or one of its territories.

Candidates, who graduate from a generic master's degree CNL program (Model C), may sit for the CNL Certification Examination prior to sitting for the NCLEX RN licensure examination. However, a candidate will not be granted CNL Certification status or considered for full certification until documentation of RN licensure (RN license number, expiration date, and state in which licensed) is received by the CNC.

2. Education:

- Graduation from a CNL master's or post-master's program, accredited by a nursing accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education, that prepares individuals with the competencies delineated in the AACN white paper on *The Education and Role of the Clinical Nurse Leader* (2007) (<http://www.aacn.nche.edu/CNL/cnlpubs.htm>). (Candidates in the last course of a CNL program may sit for the exam prior to graduation.)
- For a candidate to sit for the CNL Certification Examination, the *Institution/School of Nursing CNL Education Program Verification Form*, signed by the dean/chief academic officer of the school of nursing, must be on file in the CNC office. The form must be submitted to and approved by the CNC only once and does not have to be submitted with each individual's application or for each testing window.
- The graduate of the CNL education program must have attained the CNL End-of-Program Competencies and completed the Required Clinical Experiences (2006) (<http://www.aacn.nche.edu/CNL/pdf/endcompsgrid.pdf>).
- As part of the formal CNL education program, the graduate must have completed a minimum of 400 total clinical hours. A minimum of 300 of the 400 hours must be in practice in the CNL role in a clinical immersion experience.
- In addition to the completed application form, **each** candidate must submit a completed *CNL Education Documentation Form*, signed by the CNL Program Director or equivalent.

CNL CERTIFICATION PROCESS

STEP 1

Applicant must meet eligibility requirements established by the CNC.

STEP 2

Institution/school schedules testing date(s) within the testing window for all eligible candidates and notifies AMP, Inc. and CNC of scheduled testing date, time, and proctor contact information.

STEP 3

CNC confirms proctor via e-mail and sends a proctor manual and tax form.

STEP 4

Applicant submits required documentation and fee to CNC. Documents include:

- Clinical Nurse Leader Certification Examination Application
- Application Attestation
- Standards of Conduct Attestation
- CNL Education Documentation Form (signed by CNL Program Director)
- Institution/School of Nursing CNL Education Program Verification Form (signed by dean/chief academic officer; form is submitted once for each school but must be approved and on file in the CNC office for candidates to be eligible to sit for CNL Certification Examination) NOTE: A list of institutions with forms on file is posted at <http://www.aacn.nche.edu/CNC/elgblinst.htm>.)
- CNL Eligibility Documentation Form (signed by dean or equivalent; if applicable - form is for existing CNL faculty at schools of nursing using the waiver of eligibility).
- Request for Special Examination Accommodations & Documentation of Disability-Related Needs Forms (if applicable)

STEP 5

CNC reviews application.

STEP 6

CNC sends electronic notification confirming receipt of application; CNC notifies applicants of outstanding documents.

STEP 7

Candidate confirms testing date, time, and location with the faculty contact.

STEP 8

CNC sends a list of scheduled examinees to the faculty contact of the exam site

STEP 9

At least two days prior to the exam date, AMP sends an electronic notification to the faculty contact with names of eligible candidates and pass codes for each candidate to access the exam.

STEP 10

The examination is administered at the institution/school as scheduled.

STEP 11

Exam results and detailed scoring are electronically sent to the candidate and to the faculty contact within ten business days.

STEP 12

Official notification and certificate is mailed to successful candidates by the CNC.

NOTE: Individuals are not officially certified until they receive a formal letter and certificate. CNC mails the formal letter and certificate approximately 30 days following the end of the testing period. Certification will be withheld from candidates with outstanding documentation or payment.

EXAMINATION FEES AND PAYMENT INFORMATION

EXAMINATION	FEE
First-time Application for Full CNL Certification Examination	\$295
Re-testing for Full CNL Certification Examination	\$230
Re-testing for Multiple-Choice Section Only	\$175
Re-testing for Simulation Section Only	\$175
Notification of Date Change (less than ten business days of original test date)	\$75

Verification Process

Employers, potential employers or other agencies may request verification of an individual's certification; a certificant may also request that verification be sent to an employer, potential employer or agency. The fee is \$20 per agency/person for a single verification request. You may request a rushed verification for \$35. This will be processed within 48 hours on weekdays after receipt of signed permission and payment.

Payment

Fees can be paid by credit card, check, or money order, payable only in U.S. funds to AACN. **A fee of \$25.00 will be charged on all returned checks.**

EXAMINATION SCHEDULING

A two-hour time limit is allotted for each section – multiple-choice and simulation. Both sections should be administered at the same time on the same day with one section administered immediately following the other; a minimum of a 30 minute break between exam sections is advised. If the exam sections will not be administered on the same day, AMP and CNC should be notified of reasons for deviating from this policy. If necessary, an institution/school of nursing, due to number of candidates and availability of computer testing facilities, may schedule two consecutive testing days (one for each section of the examination) - multiple-choice would be administered on day one and the simulation would be administered on day two.

Designated testing periods or testing windows are determined by CNC and AMP and are scheduled to coincide with the end of the academic semester. The testing date ranges allow flexibility for faculty at the individual schools to schedule a date for test administration that meets the needs of the school, faculty and students. The faculty contact must notify AMP (WTA@goAMP.com or by calling 913-895-4600 x4868) and CNC of the scheduled test site, date, time, and proctor contact information. Test administration should occur between 8:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. CT Monday through Friday to insure that technical assistance is available at AMP. CNC will send a Proctor Orientation Handbook to the designated contact of each testing site.

Effective July 1, 2009, proctors for the exam do not receive an honorarium.

EXAMINATION CONTENT AND FORMAT

Multiple-Choice

The multiple-choice section is composed of 105 questions. A candidate's score is based on 90 of these questions; 15 are "trial" or "pretest" questions that are interspersed throughout the examination. Pre-testing questions allows the Examination Committee and CNC to collect meaningful statistics about new questions that may appear as scored questions on future examinations. **A candidate is allowed two hours in which to complete this section of the examination.** You may go back and change previous answers in this section any time during those two hours.

The examination is based on three major content areas. Each content area is composed of four to six sub-content areas. These are listed in the Examination Content Outline (Included in Appendix A). In addition, the number of examination questions devoted to each major content area is indicated.

Each question of the multiple-choice section also is categorized by a cognitive level that a candidate would likely use to respond. These categories are:

1. Recall - the ability to recall or recognize specific information;
2. Application - the ability to comprehend, relate or apply knowledge to new or changing situations; and
3. Analysis - the ability to analyze and synthesize information, determine solutions and/or evaluate the usefulness of a solution.

Clinical Simulation

The simulation section consists of seven problems. Two of these problems are "pretest" problems and do not count in the scoring of the examination. The pretest problems are randomly embedded and are not identified in the examination, so candidates should complete all seven problems with the same level of effort. **The time for the candidates to complete the simulation section is two hours. Unlike the multiple-choice section, answers may not be changed once selected.**

The simulation section consists of seven separate individual patient or system management problems. The clinical setting and patient situation for each problem are designed to simulate reality and be relevant to the clinical practice of the CNL.

It is highly recommended that candidates view and experience a sample simulation problem. To access a sample simulation, go to the "Sample Simulation Question" link posted on www.aacn.nche.edu/CNC. The sample simulation is designed to familiarize a candidate with the format of the simulation questions on the exam. Not all choices or options provided in each section are totally wrong or right. Some choices are more critical than others and are weighted more heavily in the scoring. Also, depending upon choices made earlier in the scenario, critical or missing information is provided and candidates are given opportunities to get back on track.

Each problem consists of three components: Scenario, Information Gathering (IG) sections, and Decision Making (DM) sections. Each problem begins with a scenario. The scenario provides the setting and patient introductory information (e.g., age, gender, presenting problems).

In *Information Gathering* (IG) sections, gather all relevant information for answering the question. Read all responses before selecting the responses that you consider necessary for responding to the question. You should select all options that are appropriate at the time. If you select more or fewer answer options than are appropriate, this will adversely impact your information gathering score.

Decision Making (DM) sections provide opportunities for making judgments or decisions. These sections may be formatted in one of two ways:

1. **Single Best Option** – There may be more than one acceptable option, but one option is generally regarded most acceptable. The instructions will be to “CHOOSE ONLY ONE” option. You should not assume that your response is incorrect if you are directed to make another selection. The simulation examination format sometimes uses this direction.
2. **Multiple Options** – Several options are considered appropriate. These sections address decisions in which a combination of actions is required. The multiple option type of decision making will have instructions to “SELECT AS MANY.”

Three windows appear on the screen at all times during a simulation examination. The Scenario Window section is displayed across the top of the screen. Each simulation begins with a brief paragraph in this window that provides preliminary information about the situation; subsequent sections contain information about the changing situation. A scroll bar is available when necessary to view all text. Each Scenario Window will also provide the candidate with specific instructions about whether to “CHOOSE ONLY ONE” response in the section or to “SELECT AS MANY” responses as appropriate to gather information.

The Options Window is displayed as the lower left portion of the screen and contains all options (choices or possible responses) from which to choose in the current section. A scroll bar is also available when necessary to view all options. The Simulation History Window is displayed as the lower right portion of the screen. This window can be displayed in two formats using the button labeled “Current Section/Simulation History” located at the top of this window. When in the “Current Section” mode, the options chosen in the current section and the results for each choice are displayed in this window. When in the “Simulation History” mode, the scenarios from all previous sections as well as the options chosen and their results are displayed in the window. A scroll bar is available on the right side of this window to review previous scenarios and/or options and results. Once a candidate has read the scenario for each section and determined which option(s) are appropriate for selection, he/she can simply click the box to the left of the option to “choose” it. Immediately, the option selected and the results for that option appear in the right-hand Simulation History Window. After a candidate selects or

“chooses” an option, he/she cannot reconsider and “unselect” it, since the information from that option has been revealed.

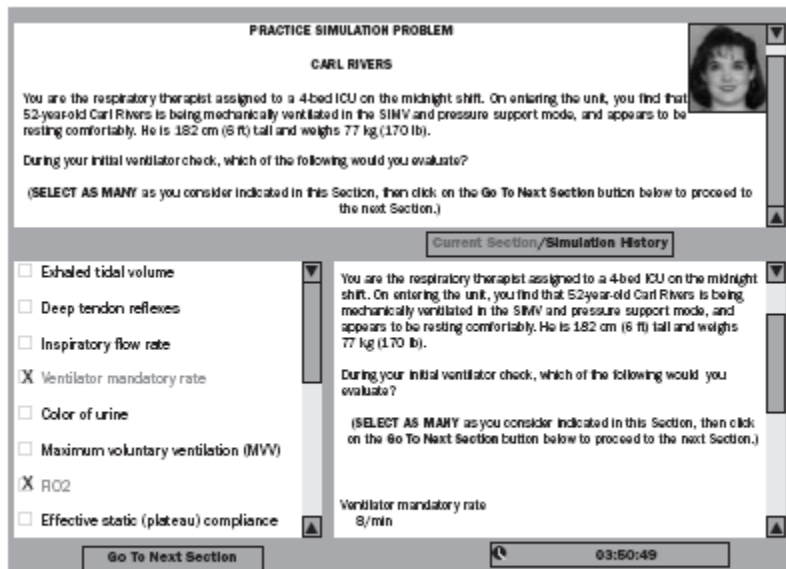


Figure 1. Sample computerized simulation screen layout – Three windows appear on the screen at all times during a simulation examination.

In sections where a candidate is instructed to “SELECT AS MANY as you consider indicated,” the candidate should select all of the options believed appropriate at the time and then click the “Go To Next Section” button at the bottom left of the screen to continue to the next section. A dialog box will appear requesting that the candidate confirm he/she wishes to continue to the next section and warning that returning to this section to make additional choices will not be possible. By selecting “Yes,” the software automatically takes the candidate to the next section of the simulation.

In sections where a candidate is instructed to “CHOOSE ONLY ONE unless directed to make another selection,” the candidate should carefully review each option and then choose the one best option. A dialog box will then appear to present the results for the choice or request that the candidate select another response in the section. A “Help Screen” will be accessible to candidates throughout the simulation examination to explain how to navigate through the examination.

Pass/Fail Score Determination

Each section, Information Gathering (IG) or Decision Making (DM), in a simulation was evaluated by content experts when the problem was developed, and a minimum pass level (MPL) was established for the section using the scoring weights assigned to the options in that section. The MPL for an individual problem on the examination (IG or DM) is the sum of the MPL for all of the IG and DM sections contained in the problem; the MPL for the total examination is determined by summing the MPLs for both IG and DM over all scored problems on the examination form.

To assist candidates in evaluating their simulation performance, scores are provided for both IG and DM sections. It is the TOTAL RAW SCORE for IG and DM that determines whether you pass or fail the Simulation Examination. Candidates must achieve TOTAL RAW passing scores in both IG and DM to successfully complete this section of the CNL examination.

SECURITY

The CNC and AMP, Inc. maintain examination administration and security standards that are designed to assure that all candidates are provided the same opportunity to demonstrate their abilities. The testing environment is continuously monitored by a test site proctor.

AMP will provide a Proctor Orientation Handbook to the faculty contact at each school scheduled to administer the examination during a specific testing window. The faculty contact is responsible for designating examination proctor(s) for the test administration.

- No personal materials, EXCEPT a photo ID, may be taken into the testing center, including purses, briefcases, hats, food/drink, paper, pen, books or reference material.
- No electronic devices are allowed in the testing room, including camera, cell phone, pager, PDA, Blackberry, laptop computer, calculator, etc.
- One pencil and one piece of scratch paper will be provided by the testing site to each candidate but MUST be returned to the test proctor prior to leaving the site.

Candidates may NOT discuss test questions, topic areas or scenarios, or possible answers, either during or after the test administration, with any other person(s) which includes faculty, other examinees or potential candidates.

COPYRIGHTED EXAMINATION QUESTIONS

All examination questions are the copyrighted property of the AACN. It is forbidden under federal copyright law to copy, reproduce, record, distribute or display these examination questions by any means, in whole or in part. Doing so may result in severe civil and criminal penalties.

PREPARING FOR THE EXAMINATION

Develop strategies to prepare for the exam (See Appendix B.). Complete a self-assessment by identifying strengths and weaknesses as it relates to the examination content outline. Review CNL education materials – particularly in the identified areas of weakness. If necessary, consult with your program director or other faculty from the institution you graduated. If you generally have difficulty taking exams, you may want to consult with a counseling center at your institution regarding test taking and/or faculty member who is an experienced item writer or who serves as a psychometrician for additional test taking guidelines.

All CNL students and graduates are encouraged to participate in the online CNL discussions. The online discussions provide you with an opportunity to communicate with those who have successfully completed the CNL exam and is an excellent vehicle to discuss how to prepare for the exam. To join AACN's online CNL discussions, contact Horacio Oliveria, AACN's Education Policy Assistant, holiveria@aacn.nche.edu.

You should also thoroughly review the Examination Content and Format section of this handbook so that you know what to expect with regards to the format of the multiple choice and simulation items. The online multiple choice self-assessment exam parallels the certification exam content and level of difficulty and is available at <http://www.aacn.nche.edu/CNC/selfassess.html>. A sample simulation item is available at <http://www.aacn.nche.edu/CNC/process.htm>.

Resources include:

- CNL Certification Examination Handbook
- CNL Examination Content Outline (See Appendix A of this handbook.)
- AACN White Paper on the Education and Role of the Clinical Nurse LeaderSM (<http://www.aacn.nche.edu/Publications/WhitePapers/ClinicalNurseLeader07.pdf>)
- AACN End-of-Program Competencies & Required Clinical Experiences for the CNL (<http://www.aacn.nche.edu/CNL/pdf/EndCompsgrid.pdf>)
- CNL Curriculum Framework for Client-Centered Healthcare (<http://www.aacn.nche.edu/CNL/pdf/curricfrmwrk.pdf>)
- Bibliography of Suggested Learning Material on Complexity Science, Nursing, Medicine and Healthcare Management prepared by the Plexus Institute (<http://www.aacn.nche.edu/CNL/references.htm>)
- Recommended Reading List (<http://www.aacn.nche.edu/CNC/references.htm>)
- CNL Online Discussion Group (e-mail holiveria@aacn.nche.edu to join)
- CNL Self-Assessment Examination (<http://www.aacn.nche.edu/CNC/selfassess.html>)
- Sample Simulation Item (<http://www.aacn.nche.edu/CNC/process.htm>)

NOTE: The list above is not an all inclusive source for the CNL examination.

RE-TESTING POLICY AND PROCEDURE

If a candidate is not successful in passing one or both exam sections (multiple-choice or simulation), the candidate may retake the section in the next testing period – spring, summer, fall. Only the section of the examination that the candidate was unsuccessful in passing must be retaken. The candidate may sit for the examination at another test site if application and arrangements are made in advance and an alternative site is available.

If unsuccessful in passing one or both sections of the CNL Certification Examination, the candidate may reapply to take the examination, or appropriate section of the examination. Individuals retesting must submit the Application Form and the Standards of Conduct along with the appropriate application fee. Candidates may retest up to two times (three examinations total) within a 12-month period. Failure of the examination **may not be appealed**.

Candidates who fail one or both sections of the examination (multiple-choice and/or simulation) three times, must submit a written request to the CNC to retake an examination. The request must be received by the CNC at least 90 days prior to the candidate's preferred examination date and will be considered by the Appeals Committee of the CNC.

The written request must include:

1. Specific reasons for the CNC to reconsider the application;
2. A self-assessment that includes specific information on experience, skills, and knowledge as it applies to the deficiency; and
3. A plan of action to meet the certification requirements. The plan of action must include documentation of progress in the plan.
4. A letter of support by a CNL faculty member or supervisor must accompany the request.

The CNC Appeals Committee will review the request and make a recommendation for approval or denial to the CNC Board of Commissioners. The CNC will notify the candidate in writing of the CNC Board of Commissioners' decision. The ruling of the CNC Board of Commissioners is final.

DISABILITY ACCOMMODATIONS

The CNC complies with the Americans with Disability Act (ADA) in ensuring that individuals with disabilities are not deprived of the opportunity to take the CNL Certification Examination solely by reason of their disabilities. However, since the CNL Certification Examination will be administered at individual schools/institutions, special needs will depend on the disability accommodations at these sites. It is therefore the responsibility of the applicant to do the following:

1. Indicate the need for ADA special accommodations on the CNL Certification Examination Application form;
2. Complete the *Request for Special Examination Accommodations* form (which includes *Documentation of Disability-Related Needs*) and enclose with the CNL application form; AND
3. Notify the testing school/institution in writing about the specific disability-related needs.

After receiving a completed Request for Special Examination accommodations form, CNC will notify the school where the examination is to be administered regarding the request.

LANGUAGE

The certification examination, as well as all communications from CNC will be in English. Translation services are not provided.

ONSITE RULES AND ADMINISTRATION

- You must bring a current government issued photo ID with you to the test site. The candidate is required to sign in for verification of identity. **A candidate without proper identification is not permitted to test. Proper identification may include: valid driver's license with a color photograph and signature; valid passport or military issued identification card with a color photograph and signature.**
- Report to the scheduled testing site designated by the faculty contact at your institution, no later than 20 minutes before the scheduled testing time. **You will not be allowed to take the examination if you arrive more than five minutes after the scheduled testing time and your examination fees will be forfeited.**
- No personal materials, EXCEPT your photo ID, may be taken into the testing center, including purses, briefcases, hats, food/drink, paper, pen, books or reference material.
- No electronic devices are allowed in the testing room, including camera, cell phone, pager, PDA, Blackberry, laptop computer, calculator, etc.
- One pencil and one piece of scratch paper will be provided to each candidate by the testing site but MUST be returned to the test proctor prior to leaving the site.

- All volume levels on your testing computer should be muted prior to the start of the examination.
- There will be no eating, drinking, or smoking permitted in the testing site.
- Permission from the examination proctor is required to leave the testing room during the examination. No additional time is granted to compensate for the lost time.
- No questions concerning the content of the examination may be asked during the testing. Notify the proctor if you have problems logging in or lose internet connection during the test.
- **During or after taking the examination, a candidate may not discuss examination questions with any other person(s) which includes faculty, other examinees or potential candidates.** This includes giving or receiving help from other examinees, discussing possible answers, question topics or scenarios.

USE OF THE CREDENTIAL, LOGO, AND TERM

Following formal notification of earning the CNL, the successful certificant may utilize the CNL designation. Below are a few suggestions on the use of the CNL credential:

- List your CNL credential on business cards, stationery, etc.
- Display a framed CNL certificate.
(<http://www.aacn.nche.edu/CNC/merchandise.html>)
- Wear the CNL lapel pin.
(<http://www.aacn.nche.edu/CNC/merchandise.html>)
- Announce earning certification and recertification in local and national publications. (Contact CNC for sample press release.)
- Give a presentation promoting CNL certification and the CNL role.
(<http://www.aacn.nche.edu/CNC/pdf/cnlpresentation.pdf>)
- Write an article for *The CNL Bulletin* on the benefits of certification.
- Document benefits of certification for your next job performance evaluation.
- Include credential in your portfolio.
- Include certification status in your curriculum vitae or resume.
- Include credential whenever your name is professionally listed.
- Notify CNC of name changes to ensure appropriate listing in the CNL Directory.

Below is a sample of how CNL should appear as a credential:

Jane Doe, MSN, RN, CNL



The CNL logo as depicted above, the initials “CNL[®],” and the name “Clinical Nurse Leader” (collectively the “Trademarks”) are all the exclusive intellectual property of the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) and its Commission on Nurse Certification (CNC). (*Refer to the CNC website for additional details or contact CNC.*)

RECERTIFICATION

The initial CNL certification is granted for a period of five years. The actual expiration date of a CNL certificate is December 31st of the fifth complete year after certification (i.e. certification of CNLs initially certified in April 2008 expires December 31, 2013). Recertification must be obtained prior to the expiration date on one’s certificate. Certification renewal ensures that previously certified individuals continue to expand their knowledge relevant to the role of the CNL. The CNL mark of excellence promotes safe, quality practice through its ongoing requirements for personal and professional growth.

Criteria

For recertification, the following is required:

- **RN Licensure**
Certificants must have a current unencumbered license as a Registered Nurse (RN). It is the responsibility of the certificant to notify the CNC when any restriction is placed on his/her RN license.
- **Professional Practice**
Applicants must attest to their employment status of a minimum 4,000 hours in the past five years in areas of advanced generalist clinical practice, nursing administration, nursing education, research and or consultation.
- **Contact Hours/Continuing Education**
Minimum of 75 contact hours relevant to the CNL or an advanced generalist nursing role – 25 of these contact hours must focus on quality and safety.
- **Documentation**
CNLs are responsible for maintaining records of their continuing education credits and may be required to substantiate these units during random audits. Certificants are encouraged to maintain an electronic portfolio. However, documentation may be submitted to the CNC electronically or in a hard copy format.

Applicants are requested to summarize how the end-of-program competencies and/or elements of the role outlined in AACN’s white paper on *The Education and Role of the Clinical Nurse Leader* have been elements of ongoing practice.

Certificants have the option to re-test for the CNL Certification Examination should they decide not to submit the recertification application criteria.

Expired Certificate

Allowing a lapse in certification greater than three months without completing and submitting the necessary documents for recertification will result in automatic nullification of your CNL Certification. You will then be required to submit a new CNL Certification Application and successfully complete the CNL Certification Examination in order to become re-certified.


Revocation of Certification

The CNC Board of Commissioners has the right to revoke an individual's CNL Certification for any reason deemed appropriate which includes, but not limited to the following:

- Falsification of certification application or application materials (Initial or Renewal)
- Failure to meet or maintain the eligibility requirements for initial certification or renewal
- Misuse, misrepresentation, or illegal use of the CNL Certification designation
- Cheating on the CNL examination, including unauthorized possession of CNL examination materials or other confidential materials.
- Any felony conviction.

The CNC Board of Commissioners is responsible for determining the revocation of certification as well as the appeals process. If an individual is in violation of any of the above, the CNC Board of Commissioners will notify the applicant in writing with the rationale for revocation of their certificate. In addition, the CNC Board of Commissioners also will notify the applicant's State Board of Nursing. The applicant may challenge the revocation by filing a written appeal to the CNC Board of Commissioners within 30-days of notification of revocation.

APPENDIX A

 Clinical Nurse Leader Certification Examination Detailed Content Outline	TOTAL	Cognitive Level		
		Recall	Application	Analysis
Item distributions by cognitive level at the minor category level are intended to be used as guides.				
1. NURSING LEADERSHIP	26	5	16	5
A. Horizontal Leadership	6	1	4	1
1. Uses nursing and other appropriate theories and models, particularly leadership, change and complexity theories				
2. Uses clinical judgment and decision-making skills to make clinical decisions regarding patient care decisions, delegation of patient care activities, and nursing care outcomes				
3. Designs, implements and evaluates client care by coordinating, delegating and overseeing the care provided by the healthcare team				
4. Functions within a microsystem and assumes accountability for healthcare outcomes for a specific group of clients within a unit or setting through the assimilation and application of research-based information to design, implement and evaluate client plans of care				
5. Role models for other healthcare providers, assessment skills including performing a risk assessment of the individual and family, performing a holistic assessment of the individual across the lifespan				
6. Delegates safely client care activities				
7. Designs, coordinates and evaluates plans of care at an advanced level				
8. Demonstrates the ability to perform, teach, delegate, and supervise nursing procedures with safety and competence				
9. Evaluates effectiveness of health teaching by self and others and provides feedback to affect change				
10. Evaluates the appropriate use of products in the delivery of healthcare				
11. Serves as a leader and partner in the interdisciplinary healthcare team				
12. Manages group processes to meet care objectives and complete healthcare team responsibilities				
13. Assumes a horizontal leadership role in the healthcare team				
14. Coaches and mentors novice nurses				



**Clinical Nurse Leader Certification Examination
Detailed Content Outline**

Item distributions by cognitive level at the minor category level are intended to be used as guides.

	TOTAL	Cognitive Level		
		Recall	Application	Analysis
B. Effective Use of Self	5	1	3	1
1. Demonstrates effective and culturally competent communication skills during assessment, intervention, evaluation, and teaching of patients and other care providers				
2. Establishes and maintains culturally competent and effective working relationships within an interdisciplinary team				
3. Communicates confidently and effectively with other healthcare workers both in collegial and subordinate positions				
4. Communicates and negotiates effectively in group interactions, particularly in task-oriented, convergent, and divergent group situations				
5. Develops a therapeutic alliance with the client as an advanced generalist				
6. Appropriately, accurately, and effectively communicate with diverse groups and disciplines using a variety of strategies				
7. Manages group processes to meet care objectives and complete healthcare team responsibilities				
C. Advocacy	4	1	2	1
1. Initiates community partnerships to identify health disparities, establish health promotion goals, and implement strategies to address those concerns				
2. Applies ethical principals as a client advocate within the healthcare delivery and policy systems				
3. Interfaces between the client and the healthcare delivery system to protect the rights of clients and to effect quality outcomes				
4. Ensures that clients, families and communities are well informed and included in care planning				
5. Serves as an advocate for the profession and the interdisciplinary healthcare team				
6. Applies knowledge regarding social, political, economic, environmental and historical issues to the analysis of societal, professional and client problems				
7. Negotiates and advocates for the role of the professional nurse as a member of the interdisciplinary healthcare team				
8. Ensures that systems meet the needs of the population(s) served and is culturally relevant				



**Clinical Nurse Leader Certification Examination
Detailed Content Outline**

Item distributions by cognitive level at the minor category level are intended to be used as guides.

	TOTAL	Cognitive Level		
		Recall	Application	Analysis
9. Articulates healthcare issues and concerns to elected and appointed officials, both public and private, and to healthcare consumers				
10. Assists consumers in informed decision-making by interpreting healthcare research				
11. Serves as a consumer advocate on health issues				
12. Articulates the significance of the CNL and other nursing roles to policy makers, healthcare providers and consumers				
13. Advocates for professional standards of practice using organizational and political processes				
14. Advocates for the nursing profession and quality nursing care services				
D. Conceptual Analysis and Implementation of the CNLsm Role	5	1	3	1
1. Assumes responsibility of own professional identity and practice				
2. Presents self as a leader in the health professional team				
3. Uses self-awareness and self-evaluation to enhance professional relationships, improve communication and improve quality of care outcomes				
4. Defines his or her professional self by purposeful and structured educational experiences for the ongoing improvement of practice competence and improved practice outcomes				
5. Assumes responsibility and accountability for current practice and healthcare information and skills				
6. Engages in ethical decision making processes and engages in an ethical decision making process that considers the personal, professional, and organizational perspective				
7. Evaluates ethical decision making from both a personal and organizational perspective and develops an understanding of how these two perspectives may create conflicts of interest				
E. Lateral Integration of Care Services	6	1	4	1
1. Delivers and coordinates care using up-to-date technology				
2. Coordinates the healthcare of clients across settings				
3. Develops and monitors comprehensive, holistic plans of care that address the health promotion and disease and injury prevention needs of client populations				



**Clinical Nurse Leader Certification Examination
Detailed Content Outline**

Item distributions by cognitive level at the minor category level are intended to be used as guides.

	TOTAL	Cognitive Level		
		Recall	Application	Analysis
4. Fosters a multidisciplinary approach to discuss strategies and identify and acquire resources for client populations that empower them to attain health and maintain wellness				
5. As a leader on the healthcare team, coordinates and performs risk analysis using appropriate analysis tools to anticipate risks to client safety				
6. Uses care management skills and principles to provide and supervise client care within specific episodes and across episodes of illness and disease				
7. Assesses the appropriate use of technology in the delivery of client care provided by other health professionals				
8. Seeks collaboration and consultation with other health professionals as necessary in the design, coordination, and evaluation of client care outcomes				
9. Manages, monitors, and manipulates the environment to foster health and healthcare quality				
10. Practices in collaboration with a multicultural work force				
11. Accesses and communicates healthcare information with healthcare providers from other disciplines, cultures and countries				
12. Uses systems and organization theory in the design, delivery, and evaluation of healthcare delivery and outcomes				
2. CLINICAL OUTCOMES MANAGEMENT	33	4	21	8
A. Illness/Disease Management	9	1	6	2
1. Assumes responsibility for the provision and management of care at the point of care in and across all environments				
2. Provides care at the point of service to individuals across the lifespan with particular emphasis on health promotion and risk reduction services				
3. Performs a comprehensive health assessment, including a comprehensive history and physical assessment				
4. Identifies patient problems that require intervention, with special focus on those problems amenable to nursing intervention				
5. Evaluates readiness for discharge and individually tailors interventions for the next level of care				



**Clinical Nurse Leader Certification Examination
Detailed Content Outline**

Item distributions by cognitive level at the minor category level are intended to be used as guides.

	TOTAL	Cognitive Level		
		Recall	Application	Analysis
6. Designs and redesigns client care based on analysis of outcomes and evidence-based knowledge				
7. Analyzes microsystems of care and outcomes datasets to anticipate individual client risk and improve quality of care delivery				
8. Completes holistic assessments and directs care based on assessments				
9. Assesses an individual's level of pain or discomfort				
10. Communicates assessment synopses to health team members and directs plans of care accordingly				
11. Applies theories of chronic illness care to patients and families				
12. Integrates community resources, social networks, and decision support mechanisms into care management				
13. Articulates differences in responses to illness and therapies considering individual's cultural, ethnic, socioeconomic, linguistic, religious and lifestyle preferences				
14. Identifies patterns of illness symptoms				
15. Teaches patients, families, and care givers to monitor symptoms and provides guides for taking action				
16. Uses advanced knowledge of pathophysiology and pharmacology to anticipate illness progression, response to therapy and to guide/teach patients and families regarding care				
17. Uses knowledge of reimbursement issues in planning care across the lifespan				
18. Customizes care to the needs of older adults considering cognitive, physical, and social abilities				
19. Incorporates knowledge of common geriatric problems and syndromes into comprehensive plans of care				
20. Coordinates multidisciplinary team providing patient/family care				
21. Identifies patterns of problem occurrence and anticipates needed interventions				
22. Customizes care based on diverse individual/family/group/community backgrounds and selects needs/preferences				



**Clinical Nurse Leader Certification Examination
Detailed Content Outline**

Item distributions by cognitive level at the minor category level are intended to be used as guides.

	TOTAL	Cognitive Level		
		Recall	Application	Analysis
23. Makes recommendations regarding readiness for discharge, having accurately assessed the patient/family level of health literacy and self-management				
24. Applies research based knowledge from nursing and the sciences as the foundation for evidence-based practice				
25. Uses evidence as a foundation for practice and practice change				
26. Develops and facilitates evidence-based protocols and disseminates these among the multidisciplinary team				
27. Articulates culturally relevant strategies to care for persons/manage symptoms at the end of life				
28. Determines nursing implications and accountabilities when newly discovered care technologies are implemented				
29. Teaches clients about healthcare technologies using appropriate client-centered strategies				
30. Synthesizes literature and research findings to design interventions for select problems				
31. Monitors patient satisfaction and initiates action plans to monitor overtime				
32. Evaluates factors contributing to disease including genetics				
B. Knowledge Management	8	1	5	2
1. Assumes accountability for client care outcomes through the assimilation and application of research-based information to design, implement and evaluate client plans of care				
2. Improves clinical and cost outcomes				
3. Uses epidemiological methods to collect data that documents the characteristics, conditions and outcomes for various client groups				
4. Participates in disease surveillance and investigations for disaster management/mass casualty incidents				
5. Facilitates team application of principles of infection control				
6. Critically evaluates and anticipates risks to client safety				
7. Anticipates risks when new technology, equipment, treatment regimens or medication therapies are introduced				
8. Applies tools for risk analysis				



**Clinical Nurse Leader Certification Examination
Detailed Content Outline**

Item distributions by cognitive level at the minor category level are intended to be used as guides.

	TOTAL	Cognitive Level		
		Recall	Application	Analysis
9. Uses institutional and unit data to compare to national benchmarks				
10. Designs and implements measures to modify risks, promote client safety and aim to prevent medical errors				
11. Interprets & uses quantitative data				
12. Applies principles of biostatistics to the design and implementation of plans of care with specific focus on risk assessment and health promotion				
13. Compares desired outcomes with national & state standards and those of other institutions				
14. Addresses variations in clinical outcomes among various groups to determine where nurses have the greatest impact at client & unit levels				
15. Demonstrates accountability for the delivery of high quality care				
16. Synthesizes data, information and knowledge to evaluate and achieve optimal client outcomes				
17. Accountable for processes for improvement of client outcomes				
18. Evaluates effectiveness of interventions including health teaching by self and others				
19. Evaluates environmental impact, products, including complementary therapies, on health outcomes				
C. Health Promotion and Disease Prevention & Injury Reduction/ Prevention Management	7	1	4	2
1. Applies research to resolve clinical problems and disseminate results				
2. Works closely with multidisciplinary team members who are caring for the same client				
3. Advocates for clients by communicating effectively with the interdisciplinary team members				
4. Engages clients in therapeutic partnerships with multidisciplinary team members				
5. Uses assessment data to guide individual plans of care, classify, store, retrieve, analyze and integrate data into information management systems to update decision support				



**Clinical Nurse Leader Certification Examination
Detailed Content Outline**

Item distributions by cognitive level at the minor category level are intended to be used as guides.

	TOTAL	Cognitive Level		
		Recall	Application	Analysis
6. Uses evidence to identify and modify interventions to meet specific client needs				
7. Counsels patients and families regarding behavior changes to achieve healthy lifestyles				
8. Engages in culturally sensitive health promotion/disease prevention intervention to reduce healthcare risks in clients				
9. Designs, coordinates, delegates, supervises, and evaluates care in a timely manner				
10. Competently delivers high quality health promotion, disease prevention and injury reduction care				
11. Uses collaborative techniques in making care decisions				
12. Demonstrates effective teaching/learning knowledge, skills, and methods				
13. Develops clinical and health promotion programs for individuals and groups				
D. Evidence-Based Practice	9	1	6	2
1. Bases clinical decisions on multiple perspectives including the individual and/or family preferences				
2. Communicates results of thinking in a collaborative manner with patient and healthcare team				
3. Uses measurement tools as foundation for assessments and clinical decisions				
4. Uses clinical judgment and clinical decision making skills in designing, coordinating, implementing, and evaluating client-focused care				
5. Synthesizes information and knowledge for critical thinking and decision making				
6. Selects most appropriate source of evidence to meet specific needs of individuals, clinical groups, or communities				
7. Uses epidemiological, social, and environmental data				
8. Evaluates large data sets to anticipate risk and evaluate care outcomes				
9. Evaluates and uses information from various sources to guide client through the healthcare system				
10. Interprets and uses quantitative and qualitative data				



**Clinical Nurse Leader Certification Examination
Detailed Content Outline**

Item distributions by cognitive level at the minor category level are intended to be used as guides.

	TOTAL	Cognitive Level		
		Recall	Application	Analysis
11. Uses healthcare research and state of the art knowledge to improve patient care				
12. Uses state of the art knowledge regarding research findings for promoting wellness and providing health information resources				
13. Accesses, critiques, and analyzes information sources				
14. Provides leadership for changing practice based on quality improvement methods and research findings				
15. Identifies relevant outcomes and measurement strategies that will improve patient outcomes and promote cost effective care				
16. Synthesizes data, information and knowledge to evaluate and achieve optimal client outcomes				
17. Collaborates with interdisciplinary team in evaluating outcomes				
3. CARE ENVIRONMENT MANAGEMENT	31	6	18	7
A. Team Coordination	6	1	4	1
1. Teaches and delegates the performance of skilled tasks by others				
2. Performs, teaches, delegates, and supervises nursing procedures in the context of safety				
3. Demonstrates critical listening as well as oral, nonverbal, and written communication skills				
4. Demonstrates effectiveness in group interactions, particularly in skills necessary to interact and collaborate with other members of the interdisciplinary healthcare team				
5. Communicates confidently and effectively with other healthcare workers in both collegial and subordinate positions				
6. Incorporates case management skills and principles in the role of later integrator of care delivery				
7. Evaluates evidence and relevant arguments appropriately, including assumptions that influence behavior				
8. Establishes and maintains effective working relationships within an interdisciplinary team to make ethical decisions regarding the application of technologies and the acquisition of data; practice in collaboration with a multicultural work force				



**Clinical Nurse Leader Certification Examination
Detailed Content Outline**

Item distributions by cognitive level at the minor category level are intended to be used as guides.

	TOTAL	Cognitive Level		
		Recall	Application	Analysis
9. Manages group processes to meet care objectives and complete healthcare team responsibilities				
10. Identifies areas in which a personal conflict of interest may arise and propose resolutions or actions to resolve/prevent the conflict				
11. Promotes a positive work environment and a culture of retention				
B. Healthcare Finance and Economics	4	1	2	1
1. Serves as a steward of the environment and human and material resources while coordinating client care				
2. Performs risk anticipation and designs plans of care to alter outcome of care				
3. Develops and leverages human, environmental and material resources				
4. Identifies and analyzes common ethical dilemmas and the ways in which these dilemmas impact client care				
5. Role models for other healthcare providers the efficient and appropriate use of healthcare technologies to maximize healthcare outcomes				
6. Understands the fiscal context in which practice occurs				
7. Evaluates the appropriate use of products in the delivery of healthcare				
8. Assumes accountability for the cost-effective and efficient management of human, environmental and material resources within microsystems				
9. Identifies high cost /high volume activities, including how much procedures cost and how those costs compare nationally and across institutions				
10. Applies basic business and economic principles and practices, including budgeting, product testing, marketing, and organizational models to the delivery of healthcare for an assigned group of clients				
11. Applies ethical principles regarding the delivery of healthcare in relation to healthcare financing and economics including those that may create conflicts of interest				
12. Identifies the impact of healthcare financial policies and economics on the delivery of healthcare and patient outcomes				



**Clinical Nurse Leader Certification Examination
Detailed Content Outline**

Item distributions by cognitive level at the minor category level are intended to be used as guides.

	TOTAL	Cognitive Level		
		Recall	Application	Analysis
13. Interprets healthcare research, particularly cost and patient outcomes, to policy makers, healthcare providers, and consumers				
14. Interprets the impact of both public and private reimbursement policies and mechanisms on patient care decisions				
15. Evaluates the effect of healthcare financing on care access and patient outcomes				
C. Healthcare Systems/Organizations	5	1	3	1
1. Acquires knowledge to work in groups, manage change and systems level dissemination of knowledge				
2. Applies evidence that challenges current policies and procedures in a practice environment				
3. Implements strategies that lessen healthcare disparities				
4. Advocates for the improvement in the institution/healthcare system, policies and nursing profession				
5. Uses systems thinking to address problems and develop solutions				
6. Collaborates with other healthcare professionals to manage the transition of clients across the healthcare continuum ensuring patient safety and cost effectiveness of care				
7. Uses quality improvement methods in evaluating individual and aggregate client care				
D. Healthcare Policy	4	1	2	1
1. Acknowledges multiple perspectives when analyzing healthcare policy				
2. Recognizes the effect of healthcare policy on health promotion/ risk reduction, and disease and injury prevention in vulnerable populations including minority and economically disadvantaged groups				
3. Influences regulatory, legislative, and public policy in private and public arenas to promote and preserve healthy communities				
4. Understands the interactive effect of health policy and healthcare economics and national and international health and health outcomes				
5. Accesses, critiques, and analyzes information sources				



**Clinical Nurse Leader Certification Examination
Detailed Content Outline**

Item distributions by cognitive level at the minor category level are intended to be used as guides.

	TOTAL	Cognitive Level		
		Recall	Application	Analysis
6. Incorporates standards of care and scope of practice for quality improvement				
7. Differentiates and delineates legislative and regulatory processes				
8. Articulates the interaction between regulatory controls and quality control within the healthcare delivery system				
9. Creates a professional ethic related to client care and health policy based on professional code of ethics				
10. Develops political voice as member of the nursing profession to influence access to care and provision of quality services to all				
11. Utilize healthcare research for consumers and officials				
12. Evaluates local, state, and national socioeconomic and health policy issues and trends as they relate to the delivery of healthcare				
13. Participates in political processes and grass roots legislative efforts to influence healthcare policy on behalf of clients or the profession				
E. Quality Management/Improvement/Risk Reduction/Patient Safety	7	1	4	2
1. Evaluates healthcare outcomes through the acquisition of data and the questioning of inconsistencies				
2. Leads the redesign of client care following root cause analysis of sentinel event(s)				
3. Gathers, analyzes and synthesizes data related to risk reduction and patient safety				
4. Analyzes systems and outcome datasets to anticipate individual client risk and improve quality care				
5. Understands economies of care, cost effectiveness, resource utilization, affecting change in systems				
6. Evaluates the environmental impact on healthcare outcomes; evaluate appropriate use of products, and human resources				
F. Healthcare Informatics	5	1	3	1
1. Designs care using information and patient care technology				
2. Analyzes systems identifying supports and gaps				
3. Accurately applies data from systems in planning and delivering care				



**Clinical Nurse Leader Certification Examination
Detailed Content Outline**

Item distributions by cognitive level at the minor category level are intended to be used as guides.

	TOTAL	Cognitive Level		
		Recall	Application	Analysis
4. Evaluates clinical information systems using select criteria				
5. Incorporates ethical principles in the use of information systems				
6. Evaluates impact of new technologies on individual, families and systems				
7. Evaluates outcomes of care supported by use of technology				
8. Describes interrelationships among information systems, communication accuracy, error reduction, and healthcare system operations				
9. Disseminates healthcare information among health team members using varied methods with a focus on precision and accuracy				
10. Validates accuracy of consumer-provided information on health issues from the internet and other sources				
11. Synthesizes healthcare information for patient specific problems				
12. Refers patients to appropriate, culturally relevant health information				
13. Demonstrates proficiency in the use of innovations such as the electronic record for documenting and analyzing clinical data				
14. Analyzes aggregate data to plan and deliver care				
15. Individualizes interventions using technologies				
16. Plans for health promotion supported by technology				
17. Promotes an environment that safeguards the privacy and confidentiality rights of patients and families				
18. Identifies situations for potential breakdown in maintaining security of data/information				
Totals	90	15	55	20

APPENDIX B



PERSONAL ACTION PLAN

The following worksheet is designed to assist you as you develop strategies to prepare for the CNL certification exam. The worksheet is intended to be used only as a guide.

Today's date: _____

Date you plan to sit for the CNL certification exam: _____

CNL CERTIFICATION EXAM CONTENT OUTLINE

Strengths

Nursing Leadership	Clinical Outcomes Management	Care Environment Management
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Horizontal Leadership ○ Effective Use of Self ○ Advocacy ○ Conceptual Analysis and Implementation of the CNL Role ○ Lateral Integration of Care Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Illness/Disease Management ○ Knowledge Management ○ Health Promotion and Disease Prevention & Injury Reduction/Prevention Management ○ Evidence-Based Practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Team Coordination ○ Healthcare Finance and Economics ○ Health Care Systems/Organizations ○ Health Care Policy ○ Quality Management/Improvement/Risk Reduction/Patient Safety ○ Healthcare Informatics

Weaknesses

Nursing Leadership	Clinical Outcomes Management	Care Environment Management
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Horizontal Leadership ○ Effective Use of Self ○ Advocacy ○ Conceptual Analysis and Implementation of the CNL Role ○ Lateral Integration of Care Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Illness/Disease Management ○ Knowledge Management ○ Health Promotion and Disease Prevention & Injury Reduction/Prevention Management ○ Evidence-Based Practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Team Coordination ○ Healthcare Finance and Economics ○ Health Care Systems/Organizations ○ Health Care Policy ○ Quality Management/Improvement/Risk Reduction/Patient Safety ○ Healthcare Informatics

Comments:

EXAM CONTENT OUTLINE ITEM	STRATEGY	RESOURCES (websites, publications, personal contacts, etc.)	TARGET DATE

Test-taking Strategies

MULTIPLE-CHOICE	SIMULATION



CNL[®] Certification Program Survey

This survey is to be completed by participants of the Clinical Nurse LeaderSM (CNL) Certification Program. Information will be used to enhance the certification process. Please fax the completed survey to **(202) 785-8320** or mail to Commission on Nurse Certification, One Dupont Circle, NW, Suite 530, Washington, DC 20036.

ADMINISTRATION

	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
Convenience of examination dates	1	2	3	4
Usefulness of the CNL Certification Examination Handbook	1	2	3	4
Usefulness of the certification section of the AACN website (www.aacn.nche.edu/CNC)	1	2	3	4
Application process	1	2	3	4

EXAMINATION

Usefulness of instructions read by the proctor	1	2	3	4
Usefulness of testing agency's instructions for taking the exam	1	2	3	4
Exam content	1	2	3	4
Amount of time to complete multiple choice section	1	2	3	4
Amount of time to complete simulation section	1	2	3	4

Activities completed to prepare for the exam (Check all that apply.):

- Reviewed required reading assignments and notes from the CNL education program
- Predicted possible questions
- Participated in institution's study course
- Reviewed AACN's white paper on *The Education and Role of the Clinical Nurse Leader*
- Reviewed the CNL Certification Examination Handbook
- Completed the online sample simulation question on www.aacn.nche.edu/CNC
- Other: _____

How has CNL certification prepared you to function in a CNL role?

(Optional)

Name (print): _____