



Clinical Nurse Leader (CNL[®]) Certification Exam

Subdomain Weights for the CNL Certification Examination Blueprint *(effective February 2012)*

Subdomain	Weight (%)
Nursing Leadership	
Horizontal Leadership	7
Interdisciplinary Communication and Collaboration Skills	7
Healthcare Advocacy	5
Integration of the CNL Role	8
Lateral Integration of Care Services	6
Clinical Outcomes	
Illness and Disease Management	7
Knowledge Management	5
Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Management	5
Evidence-Based Practice	8
Advanced Clinical Assessment	5
Care Environment Management	
Team Coordination	6
Healthcare Finance and Economics	5
Healthcare Systems	5
Healthcare Policy	4
Quality Improvement	6
Healthcare Informatics	4
Ethics	7

**CNL Certification Exam Detailed Test Blueprint
(Effective February 2012)**

			Weight
I.	Nursing Leadership		33%
	A.	Horizontal Leadership	7%
		1. Applies theories and models (e.g. Nursing, Leadership, Complexity, Change) to practice	
		2. Applies evidence-based practice to make clinical decisions and assess outcomes	
		3. Understands microsystem functions and assumes accountability for healthcare outcomes	
		4. Designs, coordinates, and evaluates plans of care at an advanced level in conjunction with interdisciplinary team	
		5. Utilizes peer feedback for evaluation of self and others	
		6. Serves as a lateral integrator of the interdisciplinary health team	
		7. Leads group processes to meet care objectives	
		8. Coaches and mentors healthcare team serving as a role model	
		9. Utilizes an evidence-based approach to meet specific needs of individuals, clinical populations, or communities within the microsystem	
		10. Assumes responsibility for creating a culture of safe and ethical care	
		11. Provides leadership for changing practice based on quality improvement methods and research findings	
	B.	Interdisciplinary Communication and Collaboration Skills	7%
		1. Establishes and maintains working relationships within an interdisciplinary team	
		2. Bases clinical decisions on multiple perspectives including the client and/or family preferences	
		3. Negotiates in group interactions, particularly in task-oriented, convergent, and divergent group situations	
		4. Develops a therapeutic alliance with the client as an advanced generalist	
		5. Communicates with diverse groups and disciplines using a variety of strategies	
		6. Facilitates group processes to meet care objectives	
		7. Integrates concepts from behavioral, biological, and natural sciences in order to understand self and others	
		8. Interprets quantitative and qualitative data for the interdisciplinary team	
		9. Uses a scientific process as a basis for developing, implementing, and evaluating nursing interventions	
		10. Synthesizes information and knowledge as a key component of critical thinking and decision making	
		11. Bridges cultural and linguistic barriers	
		12. Understands clients' values and beliefs	
		13. Completes documentation as it relates to client care	
		14. Understands the roles of interdisciplinary team members	
		15. Participates in conflict resolution within the healthcare team	

		16. Promotes a culture of accountability	
	C.	Healthcare Advocacy	5%
		1. Interfaces between the client and the healthcare delivery system to protect the rights of clients	
		2. Ensures that clients, families and communities are well informed and engaged in their plan of care	
		3. Ensures that systems meet the needs of the populations served and is culturally relevant	
		4. Articulates healthcare issues and concerns to officials and consumers	
		5. Assists consumers in informed decision-making by interpreting healthcare research	
		6. Serves as a client advocate on health issues	
		7. Utilizes chain of command to influence care	
		8. Promotes fairness and non-discrimination in the delivery of care	
		9. Advocates for improvement in the health care system and the nursing profession	
	D.	Integration of the CNL Role	8%
		1. Articulates the significance of the CNL role	
		2. Advocates for the CNL role	
		3. Assumes responsibility of own professional identity and practice	
		4. Maintains and enhances professional competencies	
		5. Assumes responsibility for lifelong learning and accountability for current practice and health care information and skills	
		6. Advocates for professional standards of practice using organizational and political processes	
		7. Understands the history, philosophy, and responsibilities of the nursing profession as it relates to the CNL	
		8. Understands scope of practice and adheres to licensure law and regulations	
		9. Articulates to the public the values of the profession as they relate to client welfare	
		10. Negotiates and advocates for the role of the professional nurse as a member of the interdisciplinary health care team	
		11. Develops personal goals for professional development and continuing education	
		12. Understands and supports agendas that enhance both high quality, cost-effective health care and the advancement of the profession	
		13. Supports and mentors individuals entering into and training for professional nursing practice	
		14. Publishes and presents CNL impact and outcomes	
		15. Generates nursing research	
	E.	Lateral Integration of Care Services	6%
		1. Delivers and coordinates care using current technology	
		2. Coordinates the healthcare of clients across settings	
		3. Develops and monitors holistic plans of care	
		4. Fosters a multidisciplinary approach to attain health and maintain wellness	

		5.	Performs risk analysis for client safety	
		6.	Collaborates and consults with other health professionals in the design, coordination, and evaluation of client care outcomes	
		7.	Disseminates healthcare information with healthcare providers to other disciplines	
II.	Clinical Outcomes Management			30%
	A.	Illness and Disease Management		7%
		1.	Assumes responsibility for the provision and management of care at the point of care in and across all environments	
		2.	Coordinates care at the point of service to individuals across the lifespan with particular emphasis on health promotion and risk reduction services	
		3.	Identifies client problems that require intervention, with special focus on those problems amenable to nursing intervention	
		4.	Designs and redesigns client care based on analysis of outcomes and evidence-based knowledge	
		5.	Completes holistic assessments and directs care based on assessments	
		6.	Applies theories of chronic illness care to clients and families	
		7.	Integrates community resources, social networks, and decision support mechanisms into care management	
		8.	Identifies patterns of illness symptoms and effects on clients' compliance and on-going care	
		9.	Educates clients, families, and care givers to monitor symptoms and take action	
		10.	Utilizes advanced knowledge of pathophysiology and pharmacology to anticipate illness progression, response to therapy, and to educate clients and families regarding care	
		11.	Applies knowledge of reimbursement issues in planning care across the lifespan	
		12.	Makes recommendations regarding readiness for discharge, having accurately assessed the client's level of health literacy and self-management	
		13.	Applies research-based knowledge from nursing and the sciences as the foundation for evidence-based practice	
		14.	Develops and facilitates evidence-based protocols and disseminates these among the multidisciplinary team	
		15.	Understands the role of palliative care and hospice as a disease management tool	
		16.	Understands cultural relevance as it relates to healthcare	
		17.	Educates clients about healthcare technologies using client-centered strategies	
		18.	Synthesizes literature and research findings to design interventions for select problems	
		19.	Monitors client satisfaction with disease action plans	
		20.	Evaluates factors contributing to disease including genetics	
		21.	Designs and implements education and community programs for clients and health professionals	

		22.	Applies principles of infection control, assessment of rates, and inclusion of infection control in plan of care	
		23.	Integrates advanced clinical assessment	
	B.	Knowledge Management		5%
		1.	Applies research-based information	
		2.	Improves clinical and cost outcomes	
		3.	Utilizes epidemiological methodology to collect data	
		4.	Participates in disease surveillance	
		5.	Evaluates and anticipates risks to client safety (e.g. new technology, medications, treatment regimens)	
		6.	Applies tools for risk analysis	
		7.	Uses institutional and unit data to compare against national benchmarks	
		8.	Designs and implements measures to modify risks	
		9.	Addresses variations in clinical outcomes	
		10.	Synthesizes data, information and knowledge to evaluate and achieve optimal client outcomes	
		11.	Demonstrates accountability for processes for improvement of client outcomes	
		12.	Evaluates effect of complementary therapies on health outcomes	
	C.	Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Management		5%
		1.	Teaches direct care providers how to assist clients, families, and communities to be health literate and manage their own care	
		2.	Applies research to resolve clinical problems and disseminate results	
		3.	Engages clients in therapeutic partnerships with multidisciplinary team members	
		4.	Applies evidence and data to identify and modify interventions to meet specific client needs	
		5.	Counsels clients and families regarding behavior changes to achieve healthy lifestyles	
		6.	Engages in culturally sensitive health promotion/disease prevention intervention to reduce healthcare risks in clients	
		7.	Develops clinical and health promotion programs for individuals and groups	
		8.	Designs and implements measures to modify risk factors and promote engagement in healthy lifestyles	
		9.	Assesses protective and predictive (e.g. lifestyle, genetic) factors that influence the health of clients	
		10.	Develops and monitors holistic plans of care that address the health promotion and disease prevention needs of client populations	
		11.	Incorporates theories and research in generating teaching and support strategies to promote and preserve health and healthy lifestyles in client populations	
		12.	Identifies strategies to optimize client's level of functioning	
	D.	Evidence-Based Practice		8%
		1.	Communicates results in a collaborative manner with client and healthcare team	

		2.	Uses measurement tools as foundation for assessments and clinical decisions	
		3.	Applies clinical judgment and decision-making skills in designing, coordinating, implementing, and evaluating client-focused care	
		4.	Selects sources of evidence to meet specific needs of individuals, clinical groups, or communities	
		5.	Applies epidemiological, social, and environmental data	
		6.	Reviews datasets to anticipate risk and evaluate care outcomes	
		7.	Evaluates and applies information from various sources to guide client through the healthcare system	
		8.	Interprets and applies quantitative and qualitative data	
		9.	Utilizes current healthcare research to improve client care	
		10.	Accesses, critiques, and analyzes information sources	
		11.	Provides leadership for changing practice based on quality improvement methods and research findings	
		12.	Identifies relevant outcomes and measurement strategies that will improve patient outcomes and promote cost effective care	
		13.	Synthesizes data, information, and knowledge to evaluate and achieve optimal client outcomes	
	E.	Advanced Clinical Assessment		5%
		1.	Designs, coordinates, and evaluates plans of care	
		2.	Develops a therapeutic alliance with the client as an advanced generalist	
		3.	Identifies client problems that require intervention, with special focus on those problems amenable to nursing intervention	
		4.	Performs holistic assessments across the lifespan and directs care based on findings	
		5.	Applies advanced knowledge of pathophysiology, assessment, and pharmacology	
		6.	Applies clinical judgment and decision-making skills in designing, coordinating, implementing, and evaluating client-focused care	
		7.	Evaluates effectiveness of pharmacological and complementary therapies	
III.	Care Environment Management			37%
	A.	Team Coordination		6%
		1.	Supervises, educates, delegates, and performs nursing procedures in the context of safety	
		2.	Demonstrates critical listening, verbal, nonverbal, and written communication skills	
		3.	Demonstrates skills necessary to interact and collaborate with other members of the interdisciplinary healthcare team	
		4.	Incorporates principles of lateral integration	
		5.	Establishes and maintains working relationships within an interdisciplinary team	
		6.	Facilitates group processes to achieve care objectives	
		7.	Utilizes conflict resolution skills	
		8.	Promotes a positive work environment and a culture of retention	

		9.	Designs, coordinates, and evaluates plans of care incorporating client, family, and team member input	
		10.	Leads gap analysis to create cohesive healthcare team	
	B.	Healthcare Finance and Economics		5%
		1.	Identifies clinical and cost outcomes that improve safety, effectiveness, timeliness, efficiency, quality, and client-centered care.	
		2.	Serves as a steward of environmental, human, and material resources while coordinating client care	
		3.	Anticipates risk and designs plans of care to improve outcomes	
		4.	Develops and leverages human, environmental, and material resources	
		5.	Demonstrates use of healthcare technologies to maximize healthcare outcomes	
		6.	Understands the fiscal context in which practice occurs	
		7.	Evaluates the use of products in the delivery of healthcare	
		8.	Assumes accountability for the cost-effective and efficient use of human, environmental, and material resources within microsystems	
		9.	Identifies and evaluates high-cost and high-volume activities	
		10.	Applies basic business and economic principles and practices	
		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 client outcomes	
		13.	Interprets healthcare research, particularly cost and client outcomes, to policy makers, healthcare providers, and consumers	
		14.	Interprets the impact of both public and private reimbursement policies and mechanisms on client care decisions	
		15.	Evaluates the effect of healthcare financing on care access and patient outcomes	
	C.	Healthcare Systems		5%
		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 healthcare system, policies, and nursing profession	
		5.	Applies systems thinking (i.e. theories, models) 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.	Utilizes quality improvement methods in evaluating individual and aggregate client care	
		8.	Understands how healthcare delivery systems are organized and financed, and the effect on client care	

		9.	Identifies the economic, legal, and political factors that influence healthcare delivery	
	D.	Healthcare Policy		4%
		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	
		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	
		6.	Incorporates standards of care and full scope of practice	
		7.	Articulates the interaction between regulatory controls and quality control within the healthcare delivery system	
		8.	Creates a professional ethic related to client care and health policy	
		9.	Understands the political and regulatory processes defining healthcare delivery and systems of care	
		10.	Evaluates local, state, and national socioeconomic and health policy issues and trends as they relate to the delivery of healthcare	
		11.	Participates in political processes and grass roots legislative efforts to influence healthcare policy on behalf of clients and the profession	
		12.	Understands global health care issues (e.g. immigration patterns, pandemics, access to care)	
		13.	Understands the effect of legal and regulatory processes on nursing practice	
	E.	Quality Improvement		6%
		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 events	
		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, and affecting change in systems	
		6.	Evaluates the environmental impact on healthcare outcomes	
		7.	Collaborates and consults with other health professionals to design, coordinate, and evaluate client care outcomes	
		8.	Evaluates the quality and use of products in the delivery of healthcare	
		9.	Identifies opportunities for quality improvement and leads improvement activities utilizing evidence-based models	
	F.	Healthcare Informatics		4%
		1.	Analyzes systems to identify strengths, gaps, and opportunities	
		2.	Applies data from systems in planning and delivering care	
		3.	Evaluates clinical information systems using select criteria	

		4.	Incorporates ethical principles in the use of information systems	
		5.	Evaluates impact of new technologies on clients, families, and systems	
		6.	Assesses and evaluates the use of technology in the delivery of client care	
		7.	Validates accuracy of consumer-provided information on health issues from the internet and other sources	
		8.	Synthesizes healthcare information for client-specific problems	
		9.	Refers clients to culturally-relevant health information	
		10.	Demonstrates proficiency in the use of innovations such as the electronic record for documenting and analyzing clinical data	
		11.	Individualizes interventions using technologies	
		12.	Identifies and promotes an environment that safeguards the privacy and confidentiality of patients and families	
		13.	Leads quality improvement team and engages in designing and implementing a process for improving client safety	
		14.	Utilizes information and communication technologies to document, access, and monitor client care, advance client education, and enhance the accessibility of care	
		15.	Aligns interdisciplinary team documentation to improve accessibility of data	
	G.	Ethics		7%
		1.	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	
		2.	Applies an ethical decision-making framework to clinical situations that incorporates moral concepts, professional ethics, and law and respects diverse values and beliefs	
		3.	Applies legal and ethical guidelines to advocate for client well-being and preferences	
		4.	Enables clients and families to make quality-of-life and end-of-life decisions and achieve a peaceful death	
		5.	Identifies and analyzes common ethical dilemmas and the ways in which these dilemmas impact client care	
		6.	Identifies areas in which a personal conflict of interest may arise and propose resolutions or actions to resolve the conflict	
		7.	Understands the purpose of an ethics committee's role in health care delivery systems	