



NATIONAL NATURAL HAIR STYLING  
THEORY EXAMINATION

CANDIDATE INFORMATION BULLETIN (CIB)

**EXAMINATION CONTENT AND IMPORTANT INSTRUCTIONS**

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

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

For each NIC National Theory Examination, there are TWO (2) parts to every Candidate Information Bulletin (CIB) stored as separate documents:

- **Examination Content and Important Instructions** – This document provides information about the scope of content covered in the Theory examination and information and guidelines related to administration of the Theory examination.
- **References** – This document provides a list of references used to develop and support the content covered in the examination. The references are always the same for the Theory and Practical examinations.

**BE CERTAIN TO DOWNLOAD AND/OR PRINT, AND REVIEW BOTH DOCUMENTS THAT MAKE UP THE NIC EXAMINATION CIB.**

**PLEASE REVIEW ALL INFORMATION CAREFULLY**

**IMPORTANT INSTRUCTIONS**

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

**NATURAL HAIR STYLING THEORY EXAMINATION  
CONTENT OUTLINE**

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

**DOMAIN 1: SCIENTIFIC CONCEPTS (45%)**

**A. Infection Control and Safety Practices**

1. Identify how disease and infection are caused and transmitted
2. Recognize purpose and/or effects of infection control principles
  - a. Levels of infection control: Sanitation/Cleaning
  - b. Levels of infection control: Disinfection
  - c. Levels of infection control: Sterilization
  - d. Process of infection control: Cross-contamination (e.g., recognition, prevention)
  - e. Process of infection control: Differentiate between the purpose of single- and multi-use tools
3. Apply blood contact and exposure procedures
4. Identify requirements of government agencies:
  - a. OSHA standards
  - b. EPA
  - c. FDA

**B. Human Anatomy and Physiology**

1. Identify function, structure, and composition of the hair and scalp
2. Identify growth cycle of hair
3. Identify signs and symptoms of conditions, disorders, and diseases of the hair and scalp
4. Identify muscles and joints and their functions of head and face
5. Identify functions of body systems as related to head, hair, and scalp:
  - a. Nervous system
  - b. Circulatory system
6. Recognize effects of nutrition on hair and scalp

**C. Basic Chemistry of Products Used in Natural Hair Styling**

1. Recognize purpose and effects of products and ingredients (e.g., shampoos, conditioners, rinses, adhesives)
2. Recognize effect of chemical processing on natural hair
3. Recognize physical interactions with chemicals
4. Recognize chemical reactions (e.g., overexposure, chemical burn)
5. Interpret the chemical pH scale

**DOMAIN 2: NATURAL HAIR CARE AND SERVICES (55%)**

- A. Client Consultation, Analysis and Documentation for Natural Hair Care Services
  - 1. Evaluate condition of client's hair and scalp (i.e., assessment)
  - 2. Analysis of hair material
  - 3. Determine client's history of hair care (e.g., past use of chemicals, extreme heat)
  - 4. Recognize conditions that would prohibit service (i.e., contraindications)
  - 5. Determine services or products
  - 6. Recommend time frame and maintenance for style
  - 7. Recognize purpose and interpret results of strand test
  - 8. Establish/Maintain client records (e.g., service history, client card, medical history)
- B. Materials and Tools used in Natural Hair Care Services
  - 1. Identify function and purpose of tools used in hair services:
    - a. Equipment (e.g., chair, workstation) and tools (e.g., irons (conventional or marcel), blow dryers, steamers)
    - b. Implements (e.g., curved needle, combs/brushes, shears)
    - c. Supplies and materials (e.g., towels, drape, neck strips)
    - d. Types of hair extension materials
  - 2. Recognize safe practices in use of tools (i.e., equipment, implements, supplies, ergonomics)
- C. Natural Hair Care Services
  - 1. Apply knowledge of procedures for safely removing braids, twists, locks, bonding/adhesives, etc.
  - 2. Apply knowledge of procedures for safely combing, brushing, and detangling natural hair
  - 3. Apply knowledge of principles and procedures for shampooing and rinsing
  - 4. Apply knowledge of principles and procedures for conditioning or treatments
- D. Natural Hair Design Procedures
  - 1. Apply principles of balance and design (e.g. facial shape, physical structure)
  - 2. Apply knowledge of principles, procedures and safety of natural hair styling:
    - a. Hair cutting (e.g., trimming, transitional cut, shaping)
    - b. Wet styling
    - c. Thermal styling (e.g., ironing, blow drying)
    - d. Braiding, twisting, wrapping, locking, etc.
      - 1. Basic Twist
      - 2. Locks
      - 3. Single Braids
      - 4. Cornrows
      - 5. Knots
  - 3. Apply knowledge of principles, procedures and safety of integration of hair material:
    - a. Braid
    - b. Sew attachment

**NATURAL HAIR STYLING THEORY EXAMINATION  
SAMPLE QUESTIONS**

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The following sample questions are similar to those presented in the NIC Natural Hair Styling Theory Examination. Each item has four answer options. Only one option is correct or the answer. An answer key is provided following the sample questions. Performance on the sample questions may not represent performance on the NIC examination.

1. Debris is removed from tools and implements using which of the following procedures?
  - (A) Cleaning
  - (B) Disinfection
  - (C) Sterilization
  - (D) Decontamination
  
2. Which of the following will reinforce and reconstruct the hair shaft?
  1. Scalp treatment
  2. Balancing shampoo
  3. Hair brushing
  4. Protein conditioner
  
3. When damaged, which of the following will cause the hair growth to be inhibited?
  - (A) Papilla
  - (B) Shaft
  - (C) Cuticle
  - (D) Arrector pili
  
4. Applying the proper amount of tension while braiding will help prevent
  - (A) dandruff.
  - (B) hair loss.
  - (C) itchy scalp.
  - (D) split ends.
  
5. Which of the following is the term for the amount of hair per square inch on the scalp?
  - (A) Elasticity
  - (B) Texture
  - (C) Density
  - (D) Resilience

**KEY: 1: A, 2: D, 3: A, 4: B, 5: C**