



2018

**Adult-Gerontology Clinical Nurse Specialist
Role Delineation Study Executive Summary**

May 2018

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The American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) contracted with PSI Services LLC to perform the role delineation study (RDS) for the ANCC Adult-Gerontology Clinical Nurse Specialist (AGCNS) examination in 2017. An RDS (sometimes referred to as a job analysis, practice analysis, or work analysis) is a scientific inquiry conducted to identify the tasks and work activities performed, the context in which those tasks and activities are carried out, and the competencies (knowledge areas, skills, and abilities) required to perform a job role successfully¹. The RDS results become the basis of a variety of human resource management initiatives. For certification, the results are used to create a validated assessment of required job competencies. This report introduces the methods and results of the RDS for the AGCNS certification examination.

Methods

ANCC assembled 10 clinicians certified in AGCNS to serve on the content expert panel (CEP) in fall 2017. The panel members feature a wide variety of work-related characteristics, such as years of experience, work setting, geographical location, and areas of expertise. This diversity helps develop a scope of practice reflective of the roles and responsibilities of the job and relatively free from bias.

The RDS process used in this study yields examination specifications that accurately reflect the scope of practice, allowing for the development of fair, accurate, and realistic assessments of candidates' readiness for certification. The process comprises three major activities, including:

1. **Content Expert Panel (CEP) Meeting** – A gathering of subject matter experts to discuss and develop a description of the scope of practice in terms of tasks, skills, and knowledge
2. **RDS Survey** – A large-scale survey of clinicians not involved with the CEP to validate the tasks, skills, and knowledge developed during the CEP meeting
3. **Development of Examination Specifications** – The development of the examination specifications by the CEP on the basis of the survey results

¹ Sackett, P. R., & Laczko, R. M. (2003). Job and work analysis: Industrial and organizational psychology. In Borman, W. C., Ilgen, D. R. & Klimoski, R. J. (eds.), *Comprehensive Handbook of Psychology, Volume 12, Industrial and Organizational Psychology*. New York, NY: John Wiley and Sons.

The CEP meeting was a two-day, web-based meeting conducted Sept. 26-27, 2017. With PSI facilitating, the CEP discussed the scope of practice; developed a list of task, skill, and knowledge statements that reflect the job role; organized the statements into a domain and subdomain structure; reviewed rating scales to be used on the subsequent survey; and developed demographic questions for the survey. The current ANCC AGCNS test content outline, *Gerontological Nursing: Scope and Standards of Practice*², and *Nursing: Scope and Standards of Practice*³ served as resources when developing the task, skill, and knowledge statements.

The RDS survey included the task, skill, and knowledge statements, as well as demographic questions developed by the CEP. PSI programmed, administered, monitored, and analyzed the survey. Respondents provided ratings on the importance and frequency of each task and the importance of each skill and knowledge area.

A pilot test of the survey, conducted Nov. 1-5, 2017, included one adult-gerontology clinical nurse specialist who reviewed the survey for functionality and clarity. On a follow-up telephone call (conducted Nov. 8, 2017), the CEP discussed comments from the pilot survey but made no modifications to the survey.

The live survey was administered Nov. 8 to Dec. 4, 2017. The invitation was sent using online survey software to 712 individuals. All invitees were active ANCC certified adult-gerontology clinical nurse specialists. Of the 555 individuals who opened the survey invitation, 130 (23.4%) completed the survey.

Examination specifications were developed during a two-day, in-person meeting on Jan. 18-19, 2018. With PSI facilitating, the CEP reviewed the survey results; finalized the tasks, skills, and knowledge that would comprise the next examination content outline; conducted a linkage activity; and finalized the item allocations for the examination. For the linkage activity, the CEP identified links between the tasks and knowledge/skill statements to ensure that each task was covered by at least one relevant skill or knowledge area and that each skill and knowledge area had at least one associated relevant task. Linkages provide evidence that the knowledge and skills are applicable to the job. Item allocations were determined through content weighting (mean importance of the skill and knowledge statements) and CEP discussion of the results.

² American Nurses Association (2010). *Gerontological Nursing: Scope and Standards of Practice, 2nd Edition*. Silver Spring, MD: ANA-ASPMN.

³ American Nurses Association (2015). *Nursing: Scope and Standards of Practice, 3rd Edition*. Silver Spring, MD: ANA

Results

The resultant examination specifications include 22 knowledge areas and 19 skills across the following three competency areas (content domain level):

1. *Assessment and Diagnosis*
2. *Planning and Implementation*
3. *Evaluation*

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