



2018

Medical-Surgical Nursing Role Delineation Study Executive Summary

July 2018

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Executive Summary

The American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) contracted with PSI Services LLC to perform the role delineation study (RDS) for the ANCC Medical-Surgical Nursing examination in 2017-2018. An RDS (sometimes referred to as a job analysis, practice analysis, or work analysis) is a scientific inquiry conducted to identify the work activities performed, the context in which those activities are carried out, and the competencies (knowledge areas, skills, and abilities) required to perform a job 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 Medical-Surgical Nursing certification examination.

Methods

ANCC assembled 10 clinicians certified in Medical-Surgical Nursing to serve on the content expert panel (CEP) in the end of 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 W. C. Borman, D. R. Ilgen, & R. J. Klimoski (Eds.), *Comprehensive Handbook of Psychology, Volume 12: Industrial and Organizational Psychology* (Vol. 12). New York, NY: John Wiley and Sons.

The CEP meeting was a two-day, web-based meeting conducted Nov. 30 to Dec. 1, 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 Medical-Surgical Nursing Test Content Outline and the *Nursing: Scope and Standards of Practice*² 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 was conducted Dec. 22, 2017 to Jan. 4, 2018, included seven medical-surgical nurses who reviewed the survey for functionality and clarity. Based on the feedback received from the pilot survey participants, no modifications were necessary following the pilot survey.

The live survey was administered Jan. 8 to Feb. 26, 2018. The invitation was sent using online survey software to 1,500 individuals. All invitees were active ANCC certified medical-surgical nurses, selected using the stratified random sampling procedure based on region. Of the 893 individuals who opened the survey invitation, 148 (16.6%) completed the survey.

Examination specifications were developed during a two-day, in-person meeting on April 30 to May 1, 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 (2015). *Nursing: Scope and Standards of Practice, 3rd Edition*. Silver Spring, MD: ANA.

Results

The resultant examination specifications include seven knowledge areas and 10 skills across the following three competency areas (content domain level):

1. *Assessment and Diagnosis*
2. *Planning, Implementation, and Evaluation*
3. *Professional Role*

The mission of the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC), a subsidiary of the American Nurses Association (ANA), is to promote excellence in nursing and health care globally through credentialing programs. ANCC's internationally renowned credentialing programs certify and recognize individual nurses in various practice areas. It recognizes health care organizations that promote nursing excellence and quality patient outcomes, while providing safe, positive work environments. In addition, ANCC accredits health care organizations that provide and approve continuing nursing education. It also offers educational materials to support nurses and organizations as they work toward their credentials.



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