



## ALABAMA BOARD OF COSMETOLOGY AND BARBERING

### COSMETOLOGY WRITTEN EXAMINATION INFORMATION

#### EXAMINATIONS BY PSI SERVICES LLC

The Alabama Board of Cosmetology and Barbering is responsible for licensing and regulating the profession of cosmetology in the State of Alabama. The Board has contracted with PSI Services, LLC (PSI) to deliver its examinations.

Candidates **MUST** pass the written examination before applying for the practical examination. You have one attempt to test per eligibility. If you fail you must reapply with the Board.

#### SCHEDULING PROCEDURES

Once approved by the Alabama Board of Cosmetology and Barbering, you are responsible for contacting PSI to schedule an appointment to take the examination. PSI will make every effort to schedule the examination site and time that is most convenient for you.

All questions and requests for information about the examination should be directed to:

PSI Services LLC  
3210 E Tropicana  
Las Vegas, NV 89121  
(833) 333-4751 • Fax (702) 932-2666  
[www.psiexams.com](http://www.psiexams.com)

#### INTERNET REGISTRATION

For the fastest and most convenient test scheduling process, PSI recommends that candidates register for their exams using the Internet. Candidates register online by accessing PSI's registration website at [www.psiexams.com](http://www.psiexams.com). Internet registration is available 24 hours a day. In order to register by Internet, complete the steps below:

1. Log onto PSI's website, select the link associated with the Alabama examinations. Complete the associated registration form online and submit your information to PSI via the Internet.
2. Upon completion of the online registration form, you will be given the available exam dates and locations for scheduling your examination. Select your desired testing date and location.

#### TELEPHONE REGISTRATION

PSI registrars are available at (833) 333-4751, Monday through Friday between 6:30 am and 9:00 pm, and Saturday/Sunday, between 8:00 am and 4:30 pm, Central Time, to schedule your appointment for the examination.

#### CANCELING AN EXAMINATION APPOINTMENT

You may cancel and reschedule an examination appointment without forfeiting your fee if your *cancellation notice is received 2 days before the scheduled examination date*. You may call PSI at (833) 333-4751 or use the PSI Website.

**Note:** A voice mail message is not an acceptable form of cancellation. Please use the PSI Website or call PSI and speak to a Customer Service Representative.

#### MISSED APPOINTMENT OR LATE CANCELLATION

Your registration will be invalid, you will not be able to take the examination as scheduled, and you will forfeit your examination fee, if you:

- Do not cancel your appointment 2 days before the schedule examination date;
- Do not appear for your examination appointment;
- Arrive after examination start time;
- Do not present proper identification when you arrive for the examination.

#### EXAMINATION SITE CLOSING FOR AN EMERGENCY

In the event that severe weather or another emergency forces the closure of an examination site on a scheduled examination date, your examination will be rescheduled. PSI personnel will attempt to contact you in this situation. However, you may check the status of your examination schedule by calling (833) 333-4751. Every effort will be made to reschedule your examination at a convenient time as soon as possible.

## COMPUTER EXAMINATION CENTER LOCATIONS

The licensing examinations are administered at the following PSI examination centers.

**Birmingham (Vestavia Hills)**  
100 Centerview Drive, Suite 100  
Vestavia Hills, AL 35216

*After you exit I-65 at Hwy 31, turn North on Highway 31 toward Vestavia Hills. Turn right at first traffic light onto Vestavia Parkway. Turn right at the first street onto Centerview Drive. Turn left into the first parking lot.*

**Huntsville**  
4900 University Square, Suite 4  
Huntsville, AL 35816

*From Memorial Parkway (US-431/231), take the University Dr (US-72 W) exit. Turn right on The Boardwalk. You will come to a dead end, facing 4900 University Square.*

**Mobile**  
Dorsey Center  
6051-B Airport Blvd.  
Mobile, AL 36608

*From East or West, take I-10 to I-65. From I-65 take Airport Blvd West exit. The site is approximately 3 miles ahead on Airport Blvd. Dorsey Center is a small red brick office complex on the left side of the road. You have to make a U-turn at the next traffic light to get to the complex. Office is in the corner of the "L".*

**Montgomery**  
500 Interstate Park Drive, Suite 530  
Montgomery, Alabama, 36104

*From I-85, take the Perry Hill Road exit (#4). Proceed north on Perry Hill Road for little less than ¼ mile. Interstate Park Drive is located on the right (east) side of Perry Hill Road. Turn right on Interstate Park Road and proceed east for approximately ¼ mile. The office is located on the main road.*

Additionally, PSI has examination centers in many other regions across the United States. You may take the written examination at any of these locations by calling (833) 333-4751. You will need to speak with a Customer Service Rep to schedule outside of Alabama.

## REPORTING TO THE EXAMINATION CENTER

On the day of the examination, you should arrive at least 30 minutes before your appointment. This extra time is for identification and familiarizing yourself with the examination process. **If you arrive late, you may not be admitted to the examination center and you will forfeit your registration fee.**

## REQUIRED IDENTIFICATION

Candidates need to provide two (2) forms of identification.

Candidates must register for the exam with their LEGAL first and last name as it appears on their government issued identification. All required identification below must match the first and last name under which the candidate is registered. Candidates are required to bring two (2) forms of valid (non-expired) signature bearing identification to the test site.

### PRIMARY IDENTIFICATION - Choose One

- State issued driver's license
- State issued identification card
- US Government Issued Passport
- US Government Issued Military Identification Card
- US Government Issues Alien Registration Card

### SECONDARY IDENTIFICATION - Choose One

- Credit Card (must be signed)
- Social Security Card
- US issued Birth Certificate with Raised Seal

\*NOTE: Student ID and employment ID are **NOT** acceptable forms of identification.

Candidates must register with the full legal name as it appears on their government issued identification. The name on the identification must be the same as the name used to register for the examination. If the candidate fails to bring proper identification or the candidate names do not match, the candidates will not be allowed to test and their examination fee will not be refunded.

## SECURITY PROCEDURES

The following security procedures will apply during the examination:

- NO conversing or any other form of communication among candidates is permitted once you enter the examination area.
- Cell phones, pagers, and children are not allowed in the examination center. **NO personal items are to enter the testing center.** PSI will not be responsible for any personal items and suggests that you leave them locked in the trunk of your car.
- No smoking, eating, or drinking will be allowed at the examination site.
- You may not exit the building during the examination.
- Copying or communicating examination content is a violation of PSI security policy and the State Law. Either one may result in the disqualification of examination results and may lead to legal action.

## **TAKING THE EXAMINATION BY COMPUTER**

### **TAKING THE EXAMINATION BY COMPUTER**

The examination will be administered via computer. You will be using a mouse and computer keyboard.

### **IDENTIFICATION SCREEN**

You will be directed to a semiprivate testing station to take the examination. When you are seated at the testing station, you will be prompted to confirm your name, identification number, and the examination for which you are registered.

### **TUTORIAL**

Before you start your examination, an introductory tutorial is provided on the computer screen. The time you spend on this tutorial, up to 15 minutes, DOES NOT count as part of your examination time. Sample questions are included following the tutorial so that you may practice answering questions, and reviewing your answers.

The “Function Bar” at the top of the sample question provides mouse-click access to the features available while taking the examination.



The screenshot shows a web-based examination interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with icons for Mark, Comments, Goto, Help, and End. Below this, a status bar displays: Question: 3 of 40, Answered: 2, Unanswered: 1, Marked: 0, View: All, Time Left(Min): 359. The main question area contains the text: "3. What do the stars on the United States of America's flag represent?". Below the question, it says "(Choose from the following options)". There are four radio button options: "1. Presidents", "2. Colonies", "3. States", and "4. Wars". At the bottom of the question area, there are two buttons: "<< Back" and "Next >>".

One question appears on the screen at a time. During the examination, minutes remaining will be displayed at the top of the screen and updated as you record your answers.

**IMPORTANT:** After you have entered your responses, you will later be able to return to any question(s) and change your response, provided the examination time has not run out.

### **EXPERIMENTAL QUESTIONS**

In addition to the number of examination items specified in the "Examination Content Outlines", a small number (5 to 10) of "experimental" questions may be administered to candidates during the examinations. These questions will not be scored and the time taken to answer them will not count against examination time. The administration of such unscored, experimental questions is an essential step in developing future licensing examinations.

### **EXAMINATION REVIEW**

The Alabama Board of Cosmetology and Barbering is utilizing the NIC examinations. The NIC conducts ongoing analysis and review of their examinations to ensure the examinations accurately measure minimal competency in the required knowledge area.

## **SCORE REPORTING**

Your score will be given to you immediately following completion of the examination. This is an unofficial score report that will be printed at the examination site.

## **NATIONAL COSMETOLOGY WRITTEN EXAMINATION CONTENT OUTLINE AND REFERENCE MATERIAL**

### **BARBER AND COSMETOLOGY EXAMINATIONS**

The National Cosmetology examination is the national licensure examination for Cosmetology, which is developed and administered by the National-Interstate Council of State Boards of Cosmetology (NIC). For more information on the examination content outlines and references go to [www.nictesting.org](http://www.nictesting.org).



NATIONAL COSMETOLOGY  
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 Cosmetology Theory Examination is the licensure examination for Cosmetologists, 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 Cosmetology 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.*

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**COSMETOLOGY THEORY EXAMINATION  
CONTENT OUTLINE**

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The following outlines the scope of content covered by the NIC National Cosmetology 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 (30%)**

**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:
    - i. Sanitation/Cleaning
    - ii. Disinfection
    - iii. Sterilization
  - b. Process of infection control:
    - i. Recognize when cross-contamination occurs
    - ii. Prevention of cross-contamination
    - iii. Differentiate between the purpose of single- and multi-use tools
3. Apply blood contact procedures
4. Identify requirements of government agencies:
  - a. OSHA standards
  - b. EPA

**B. Human Anatomy and Physiology**

1. Identify function and structure of the:
  - a. Hair and scalp
  - b. Skin
  - c. Nails
2. Identify signs and symptoms of conditions, disorders, and diseases related to:
  - a. Hair and scalp
  - b. Skin
  - c. Nails
3. Identify muscles and joints and their functions related to:
  - a. Head and face
  - b. Arms and hands
  - c. Legs and feet
4. Identify functions of:
  - a. Nervous system
  - b. Circulatory system

**C. Basic Chemistry of Products Used in Cosmetology**

1. Recognize purpose and effects of products and ingredients
2. Recognize interaction between chemicals
3. Recognize physical interactions with chemicals
4. Recognize chemical reactions (e.g., overexposure, chemical burn)
5. Recognize the chemical pH scale

**DOMAIN 2: HAIR CARE AND SERVICES (40%)**

A. Client Consultation, Analysis and Documentation for Hair Care Services

1. Evaluate condition of client's hair and scalp (i.e., assessment)
2. Recognize conditions that would prohibit service (i.e., contraindications)
3. Determine services or products
4. Recognize purpose and interpret results of preliminary tests (e.g., predisposition and strand tests)
5. Establish/Maintain client records (e.g., service history, client card, medical history)

B. Tools used in Hair Care Services

1. Identify function, purpose and infection control procedures of tools used in hair services:
  - a. Equipment (e.g., chair, workstation)
  - b. Implements (e.g., razors, shears, combs/brushes)
  - c. Supplies and materials (e.g., towels, drape, neck strips)
  - d. Electrical tools (e.g. irons, blow dryers, clippers)
  - e. Proper disinfection procedures
2. Recognize safe practices for use of tools (i.e., equipment, implements, supplies, ergonomics)

C. Hair Care

1. Apply knowledge of principles and procedures for shampooing and conditioning
2. Apply knowledge of principles and procedures for scalp treatments and scalp massage
3. Apply knowledge of draping (e.g. chemical, shampoo, cutting)

D. Hair Design

1. Apply knowledge of principles, procedures and safety of hair cutting and shaping
2. Apply knowledge of principles, procedures and safety of hair styling:
  - a. Wet styling
  - b. Thermal styling
  - c. Natural hair styling (e.g., braiding)
3. Apply knowledge of principles, procedures and safety related to hair enhancements:
  - a. Extension application and removal:
    - i. Braid and sew attachment
    - ii. Bonding
    - iii. Fusion bonding
    - iv. Tube shrinking
    - v. Linking
4. Apply principles of balance and design (e.g. facial shape, physical structure)

E. Chemical Services

1. Apply knowledge of principles, procedures and safety for:
  - a. Hair coloring (including corrective color)
  - b. Hair lightening
  - c. Foiling
  - d. Chemical hair relaxing/restructuring and curl reduction
    - i. Hydroxide
    - ii. Thio
    - iii. Keratin
  - e. Chemical waving/texturizing:
    - i. Alkaline
    - ii. Acid
    - iii. Non-thio
    - iv. Keratin

**DOMAIN 3: SKIN CARE AND SERVICES (15%)**

A. Client Consultation, Analysis and Documentation for Skin Care Services

1. Evaluate condition of client's skin:
  - a. Skin type
  - b. Skin condition
2. Identify contraindications:
  - a. Disorders
  - b. Diseases
3. Determine services and products
4. Establish/Maintain client records (e.g., service history, client card, medical history)

B. Tools used for skin care services

1. Identify function, purpose and infection control procedures of tools:
  - a. Equipment (e.g., chair, steamer)
  - b. Implements (e.g., tweezers, brushes, extractors)
  - c. Supplies, products, and materials (e.g., creams, masks, towels, body and hair drapes)
  - d. Proper disinfection procedures
2. Recognize and understand safe practices for use of tools (i.e., equipment, implements, supplies, and ergonomics)

C. Facial skin care services

1. Apply knowledge of principles, procedures and safety for:
  - a. Cleansing
  - b. Steaming
  - c. Exfoliation
  - d. Extraction
  - e. Massage
  - f. Masks
  - g. Hair Removal:
    - i. Tweezing
    - ii. Depilatory
    - iii. Hard wax
    - iv. Soft wax
  - h. Makeup application
  - i. Electrical equipment

**DOMAIN 4: NAIL CARE AND SERVICES (15%)**

A. Client Consultation, Analysis and Documentation for nail care services

1. Evaluate condition of client's nails
2. Identify contraindications:
  - a. Disorders
  - b. Diseases
3. Determine services and products
4. Establish/Maintain client records (e.g., service history, client card, medical history)

B. Tools used in nail care services

1. Identify function, purpose and infection control procedures of tools:
  - a. Equipment (e.g., workstation, pedicure basin)
  - b. Implements (e.g., nippers, file)
  - c. Supplies, products, and materials (e.g., towels, creams, polish)
  - d. Proper disinfection procedures
2. Recognize and understand safe practices for use of tools (i.e., equipment, implements, supplies, and ergonomics)

C. Apply knowledge of principles, procedures and safety for basic manicure and pedicure

D. Apply knowledge of principles, procedures and safety for application, maintenance, and removal of nail enhancements:

1. Nail tips
2. Acrylics

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## COSMETOLOGY THEORY EXAMINATION SAMPLE QUESTIONS

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The following sample questions are similar to those presented in the NIC Cosmetology 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. Which of the following will reinforce and reconstruct the hair shaft?  
(A) Scalp treatment  
(B) Balancing shampoo  
(C) Hair brushing  
(D) Protein conditioner
2. When damaged, which of the following will cause the hair growth to be inhibited?  
(A) Papilla  
(B) Shaft  
(C) Cuticle  
(D) Arrector pili
3. A condition caused by an infestation of head lice is  
(A) tinea barbae.  
(B) scabies.  
(C) pediculous capitalis.  
(D) tinea capitis.
4. Debris is removed from tools and implements using which of the following procedures?  
(A) Cleaning  
(B) Disinfection  
(C) Sterilization  
(D) Decontamination
5. What implement adds shine and smooths wavy ridges on the natural nail during a manicure?  
(A) Coarse file  
(B) Metal file  
(C) Nail brush  
(D) Nail buffer
6. What is another name for the dermis layer of the skin?  
(A) Spiny layer  
(B) Horny layer  
(C) True skin  
(D) Basal cell
7. The massage movement intended to soothe muscles is  
(A) petrissage.  
(B) tapotement.  
(C) friction.  
(D) effleurage.



**NIC NATIONAL COSMETOLOGY THEORY EXAMINATION CIB**

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8. What product can be used to equalize the porosity of the hair?
- (A) Shampoo
  - (B) Fillers
  - (C) Lightener
  - (D) Developer

**KEY: 1: D, 2: A, 3: C, 4: A, 5: D, 6: C, 7: D, 8: B**

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To take the NIC Cosmetology Online Practice Exam (English Only) [CLICK HERE](https://www.iqttesting.com/registrationv2008/quickregister.aspx) or go to:  
<https://www.iqttesting.com/registrationv2008/quickregister.aspx> (\$39.00 fee applies)

For assistance, please call IQT at 1-866-773-1114.