

Preparing for the NLN Nursing Pre-Admission Exam (PAX)©

Nursing School Entrance Examination

Does your nursing program require that you take the National League for Nursing (NLN) Pre-Admission Examination (PAX)? This bulletin will be an invaluable tool in guiding your preparation for the PAX exam. This booklet contains general preparation information for the PAX, strategies for the exam, information for how to register with the NLN, tips for what to expect on test day, and how to retrieve and interpret your score report.

The programs that you are applying to will provide you with the necessary information for PAX test dates, payment, and required documentation. Additionally, each school determines for themselves how PAX scores are used for admission, by preparing and doing your best to achieve a higher score on the exam the better your chance for being admitted to the nursing program.

Content of the Pre-Admission Exams

The purpose of an entrance exam is to evaluate academic ability in order to identify the most qualified applicants. The items are not specific to nursing and there is no prerequisite for nursing-related knowledge. The PAX measures three academic proficiencies: verbal ability, mathematics, and science. Forty minutes is allowed for each subtest; the total time for the exam is 2 hours but you should plan 2.5 - 3 hours from arrival at the testing center.

The *Verbal Ability* section is designed to measure two primary skills: word knowledge and reading comprehension (median 11th grade reading level). The 60-question **verbal ability** test measures your word knowledge ability and reading comprehension. There are three types of word knowledge questions. The item might require you to identify the meaning of a word as it is used in a sentence, identify a word's synonym or identify a word's antonym. The reading comprehension section focuses on your reasoning and critical thinking ability. Five short passages in each test require you to analyze and interpret the material presented. These questions assess your ability to determine the main ideas and supporting details, draw conclusions, make inferences, and apply information to new situations.

The *Mathematics* section is 40-questions designed to measure an applicant's ability to solve basic mathematic problems that are often encountered in a nursing program curriculum, including those containing operations with integers, fractions, decimals, percentages, conversions, algebra, geometry, and mathematical concepts. Data interpretation, applied mathematics, and scientific notation are also included.

The *Science* section is 60-questions designed to measure an applicant's knowledge of general principles of high-school-level chemistry, earth science, biology, physics, health, and human anatomy and physiology.