



TERMS OF REFERENCE

ITEM WRITING GROUPS FOR THE CANADIAN PRACTICAL NURSE REGISTRATION EXAMINATION

Assessment Strategies, Inc. (ASI) division operates on the principle that content expertise for examinations is provided by user jurisdictions through the work of various committees and working groups, such as ITEM WRITING. In this way, user jurisdictions play a major role in the development of the PN registration examination. Item writers are selected based on several criteria including having knowledge of current practice for beginning practitioners. All item writers are provided with an orientation on developing test questions.

1. MANDATE

- a) To develop multiple-choice items based on the Blueprint and the guidelines for writing multiple-choice items.
- b) To develop for each multiple-choice item, rationales for the correct and incorrect options, by following the guidelines for writing rationales.

2. PARTICIPANTS

2.1. Group Composition

Item writers are selected by ASI from its bank of item writers who have been nominated by user jurisdictions.

Each item writing group has a minimum of four participants and in most cases, these participants represent different jurisdictions and different areas of nursing expertise.

2.2. Criteria used to appoint item writers

The item writer must:

- be currently registered/licensed;
- possess some nursing expertise beyond the basic level, acquired either through education preparation or clinical experience, appropriate to the examinee population for which items are being prepared;
- have knowledge of current practice for practical nurses beginning to practice;

- be able to think conceptually and to operationalize competencies into multiple-choice items;
- view nursing and the nursing process in broad, general terms;
- possess flexibility in using different approaches to solving problems;
- think critically and creatively, and express ideas effectively both orally and in writing;
- be able to accept criticism of one's ideas and written materials and use this criticism effectively;
- be able to work well in a group;
- be able to work intensively on a project;
- possess, if at all possible, basic computer literacy (e.g., Microsoft Word®).

3. TERM OF OFFICE

An item writer usually attends only one session per year, but may be asked to attend more than one at the discretion of ASI. The nominations for item writers are valid for a period of one year.

4. MEETINGS

Item writing groups meet for a period of five days, as required, throughout the year.

5. FUNCTIONS OF ITEM WRITERS

The item writer must:

- follow the technical specifications provided in the Blueprint;
- create items to fulfil specific competencies for beginning practitioners;
- follow ASI guidelines for writing multiple-choice items and rationales for these items;
- evaluate the item writing session.

6. FUNCTIONS OF ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES

ASI staff shall:

- orient participants to and facilitate the process of writing multiple-choice items and rationales;
- interpret the reference documents used by item writers such as the list of competencies, the technical specifications, the item-writing kit, the reference books, etc.;
- describe and clarify the overall intent of the Blueprint;
- direct the discussion when participants critique the items and rationales;
- provide psychometric expertise throughout the session.