



## Naturopathic Physician Licensing Exam (NPLEX) Brief

Naturopathic Physicians Licensing Examination (NPLEX) is an independent, nonprofit organization whose purpose is to develop valid and reliable licensing examinations. The NPLEX has been developed in accordance with accepted psychometric standards and principles, encompassing practice analysis, exam blueprint development, item writer training, subject matter expert review, post-test psychometric analysis and standard setting via the Angoff method.

The examinations developed by NPLEX are primarily case based, consisting of clinical summaries followed by several questions pertaining to the patient's case. The integrated nature of this type of testing ensures the examinee demonstrates concurrent mastery of the competencies tested. The NPLEX Council of Exam Chairs oversees the exam development process.

### **THE PART I - BIOMEDICAL SCIENCE EXAMINATION**

The Part I - Biomedical Science Examination evaluates the foundational knowledge and skills required for clinical training. Taken after completion of all biomedical science coursework at an accredited naturopathic medical program, the 200-question Part I - Biomedical Science Examination evaluates comprehensive knowledge in seven specific biomedical areas: anatomy, physiology, biochemistry, genetics, microbiology, immunology, and pathology.

### **THE PART II - CLINICAL SCIENCE EXAMINATIONS**

The Part II - Core Clinical Science Examination evaluates the advanced knowledge and clinical decision-making skills essential for safe and effective practice as a naturopathic physician. After successful passage of Part I and graduation from a CNME-accredited naturopathic program, candidates are eligible to take Part II.

The 400-question NPLEX Part II - Core Clinical Science Examination evaluates nine core areas including physical and clinical diagnosis, lab and imaging diagnostics, pharmacology, emergency medicine, clinical nutrition, physical medicine, psychology, botanical medicine and homeopathy.

The examination questions are arranged as clinical case scenarios combined with questions that challenge candidates to provide differential diagnoses, select appropriate diagnostic tests, prescribe safe and effective treatments, manage acute-care emergencies, and interpret research findings. The NPLEX Part II examination ensures that candidates possess the breadth and depth of knowledge required to meet the demands of naturopathic medical practice.

## **THE PART II - ELECTIVE EXAMINATIONS**

Certain jurisdictions have additional licensure requirements, and four supplemental examinations have been developed by NPLEX to meet these needs: Acupuncture, Minor Surgery, Parenteral Medicine and Elective Pharmacology.

## **PHARMACOLOGY CONTENT ON THE NPLEX II-CORE CLINICAL VS. THE ELECTIVE PHARMACOLOGY EXAMINATIONS**

The pharmacology questions on the Core Clinical Science Exam focus on ensuring that naturopathic physicians have a critical understanding of pharmaceutical management, and how to safely integrate complementary and alternative therapies.

The pharmacology competencies on the Core Clinical Science Exam include:

- Describe primary actions, indications, contraindications, and adverse effects of pharmaceutical medications (including nutrient deficiencies), and potential interactions with botanical medicines, nutritional supplements, and other pharmaceuticals.
- Identify natural therapeutic interventions that have effects similar to commonly prescribed pharmaceuticals.
- Identify and address polypharmacy issues including coordination of care between multiple prescribers.
- Monitor therapeutic drug levels and assess for toxicity.
- Recognize and address abuse of prescription medications and recreational substances.
- Refer to and/or co-manage with prescribing practitioners to ensure patient safety.

## **PART II - ELECTIVE PHARMACOLOGY EXAM**

The Part II - Elective Pharmacology Examination further evaluates the candidate's mastery of primary-care prescribing. This examination has been adopted by several jurisdictions to establish prescribing competency, allowing qualified NDs to practice to the scope of their training with independent and broad prescribing rights.

While the pharmacology questions on the Part II - Core Clinical Science Examination covers the breadth and scope of all the conditions covered on that exam, the questions on the Part II -Elective Pharmacology Examination further focus on the most common medications prescribed in primary care.

The 75-question examination tests candidates on the following competencies:

- I. **PRINCIPLES:** Indications for prescription of drugs, the mechanisms of action of drug classes and of specific drugs, and the principles of pharmacodynamics and pharmacokinetics.
- II. **PATIENT SAFETY:** Contraindications for drugs, common and/or critical adverse effects of drugs, identify factors that affect drug toxicity, potential drug-drug interactions, perform physical assessments and/or appropriate lab tests to monitor drug efficacy and assess drug toxicity.
- III. **PRESCRIBING:** Select drug prescriptions to address primary-care conditions, instruct patients on appropriate use and administration of prescription drugs, appropriate dosing procedures and multi-drug protocols, identify and manage polypharmacy issues, demonstrate knowledge of the abuse potential of prescription and recreational drugs, and identify conditions and treatments most appropriately managed by referral to a specialist.

For more information visit [North American Board of Naturopathic](http://North American Board of Naturopathic)