

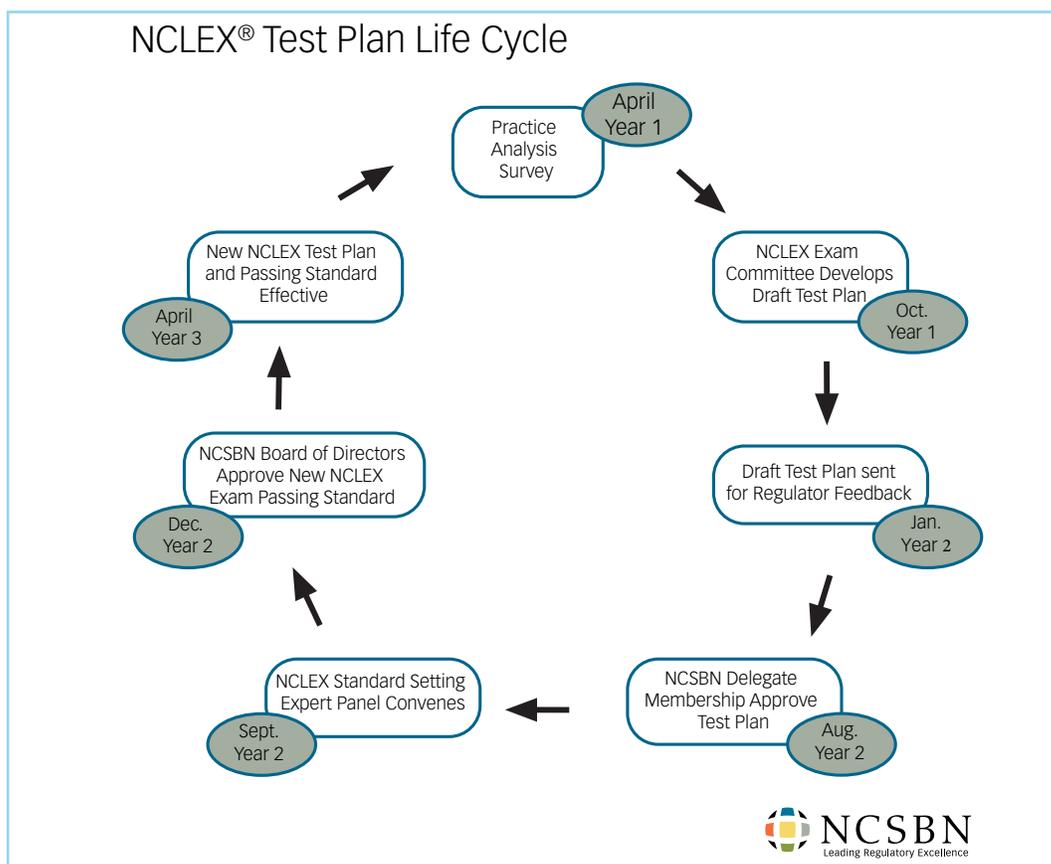
The Life Cycle of the NCLEX Test Plan

NCSBN reviews the test plans for both the NCLEX-RN and NCLEX-PN once every three years. The recommended changes are based upon empirical data collected from newly licensed nurses, which can be found in the [Practice Analysis: Linking the NCLEX Examination to Practice](#) published by NCSBN.

In these studies, thousands of newly licensed nurses are surveyed and asked about the frequency and importance of performing entry-level nursing care activities. The data is analyzed and used to determine whether changes are needed in the corresponding test plan. The practice analysis provides validity evidence to support the activities that entry-level nurses are performing and the importance of those activities.

Recommendations regarding the test plans are sent to nursing regulators, the NCSBN Board of Directors, the NCLEX Examination Committee, and NCSBN legal counsel. Based upon the most recent survey results, as well as expert opinion and feedback from stakeholders, the NCSBN Delegate Assembly provides recommendations and/or approval of the proposed test plan. This process helps to ensure a comprehensive review of the test plan and involvement of groups with a variety of viewpoints.

Appropriate time is allotted to allow for review and comment of the draft test plans. The below figure represents the triennial timeline for NCLEX test plan development and implementation.



Since nursing practice is a continually evolving discipline, and practice analyses are conducted every three years, it may not be practical to revise curriculum based on the minor changes in the Test Plan. The test plan, however, may be a useful document for nursing programs to consider when reviewing a curriculum because the test plan is based upon the knowledge, skills and abilities that are needed to practice nursing safely and effectively at the entry-level.