

Nursing Ethics and Law Practice Exam (Sample)

Study Guide



Everything you need from our exam experts!

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Introduction

Preparing for a certification exam can feel overwhelming, but with the right tools, it becomes an opportunity to build confidence, sharpen your skills, and move one step closer to your goals. At Examzify, we believe that effective exam preparation isn't just about memorization, it's about understanding the material, identifying knowledge gaps, and building the test-taking strategies that lead to success.

This guide was designed to help you do exactly that.

Whether you're preparing for a licensing exam, professional certification, or entry-level qualification, this book offers structured practice to reinforce key concepts. You'll find a wide range of multiple-choice questions, each followed by clear explanations to help you understand not just the right answer, but why it's correct.

The content in this guide is based on real-world exam objectives and aligned with the types of questions and topics commonly found on official tests. It's ideal for learners who want to:

- Practice answering questions under realistic conditions,
- Improve accuracy and speed,
- Review explanations to strengthen weak areas, and
- Approach the exam with greater confidence.

We recommend using this book not as a stand-alone study tool, but alongside other resources like flashcards, textbooks, or hands-on training. For best results, we recommend working through each question, reflecting on the explanation provided, and revisiting the topics that challenge you most.

Remember: successful test preparation isn't about getting every question right the first time, it's about learning from your mistakes and improving over time. Stay focused, trust the process, and know that every page you turn brings you closer to success.

Let's begin.

How to Use This Guide

This guide is designed to help you study more effectively and approach your exam with confidence. Whether you're reviewing for the first time or doing a final refresh, here's how to get the most out of your Examzify study guide:

1. Start with a Diagnostic Review

Skim through the questions to get a sense of what you know and what you need to focus on. Your goal is to identify knowledge gaps early.

2. Study in Short, Focused Sessions

Break your study time into manageable blocks (e.g. 30 - 45 minutes). Review a handful of questions, reflect on the explanations.

3. Learn from the Explanations

After answering a question, always read the explanation, even if you got it right. It reinforces key points, corrects misunderstandings, and teaches subtle distinctions between similar answers.

4. Track Your Progress

Use bookmarks or notes (if reading digitally) to mark difficult questions. Revisit these regularly and track improvements over time.

5. Simulate the Real Exam

Once you're comfortable, try taking a full set of questions without pausing. Set a timer and simulate test-day conditions to build confidence and time management skills.

6. Repeat and Review

Don't just study once, repetition builds retention. Re-attempt questions after a few days and revisit explanations to reinforce learning. Pair this guide with other Examzify tools like flashcards, and digital practice tests to strengthen your preparation across formats.

There's no single right way to study, but consistent, thoughtful effort always wins. Use this guide flexibly, adapt the tips above to fit your pace and learning style. You've got this!

Questions

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- 1. Which statement best describes general supervision in nursing practice?**
 - A. The supervisor regularly coordinates, directs, or inspects nursing care and is within reach by being in the building or by phone.**
 - B. The supervisor must be physically present in the patient's room at all times.**
 - C. Supervision is only required for physicians.**
 - D. Supervision is not required for routine nursing tasks.**

- 2. Which term refers to conduct that falls below the standards established by the law?**
 - A. Negligence**
 - B. Libel**
 - C. Malpractice**
 - D. Liability**

- 3. Which term describes the values and ethical principles guiding nursing practice, conduct, and relationships?**
 - A. Autonomy**
 - B. Morals**
 - C. Nursing ethics**
 - D. Personal ethics**

- 4. Which term designates a health care proxy authorized to make medical decisions for a patient who cannot speak for themselves?**
 - A. Durable Medical Power of Attorney**
 - B. Duty**
 - C. End-of-Life Principles**
 - D. Felony**

- 5. Breach of duty is defined as which of the following?**
 - A. Failure to meet the standard of care by omission or commission**
 - B. Informed consent not obtained**
 - C. Assault or battery**
 - D. Privacy violation**

- 6. Which term refers to independence and the freedom to choose?**
- A. Autonomy**
 - B. Beneficence**
 - C. Morals**
 - D. Nursing ethics**
- 7. Which term represents the principles that guide end-of-life care?**
- A. Euthanasia**
 - B. End-of-Life Principles**
 - C. Institutional Liability**
 - D. Good Samaritan Act**
- 8. Which statement defines physician-assisted suicide?**
- A. A form of euthanasia in which a doctor provides the means for someone to end his or her own life.**
 - B. A care approach where nurses supervise patient comfort measures.**
 - C. A legal requirement for physicians to report end-of-life.**
 - D. A government program funding hospice.**
- 9. In pediatric care, which concept allows families to indicate treatment preferences when the patient cannot decide?**
- A. Informed Consent**
 - B. Authorized Consent**
 - C. Durable Power of Attorney**
 - D. Advance Directives**
- 10. Which term refers to a moral or legal obligation to provide care in an acceptable way?**
- A. HIPAA**
 - B. Informed Consent**
 - C. Duty**
 - D. General (Implied) Consent**

Answers

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1. A
2. A
3. C
4. A
5. A
6. A
7. B
8. A
9. D
10. C

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Explanations

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1. Which statement best describes general supervision in nursing practice?

- A. The supervisor regularly coordinates, directs, or inspects nursing care and is within reach by being in the building or by phone.**
- B. The supervisor must be physically present in the patient's room at all times.**
- C. Supervision is only required for physicians.**
- D. Supervision is not required for routine nursing tasks.**

General supervision means oversight that is ongoing but not necessarily in person. The supervisor regularly coordinates, directs, or inspects nursing care and remains within easy reach—by being in the same building or reachable by phone—so guidance and accountability are available as care is delivered. This level allows appropriate delegation to others while ensuring patient safety through timely guidance and intervention when needed. It is not about being physically present in the patient's room at all times, and supervision is not limited to physicians, nor is it accurate to say supervision isn't needed for routine tasks; supervision can apply to delegated routine activities with the supervisor available for consultation as needed. For example, a nurse supervisor may review care plans and medication administration records on the unit and be reachable to support staff during rounds.

2. Which term refers to conduct that falls below the standards established by the law?

- A. Negligence**
- B. Libel**
- C. Malpractice**
- D. Liability**

Negligence is conduct that falls below the standard of care established by law. It means failing to act as a reasonably prudent person would in similar circumstances, and that failure must lead to harm. In healthcare, this shows up when a nurse or other professional does not meet accepted standards of care and a patient is injured as a result. The concept rests on four elements: a duty to the patient, a breach of that duty, causation linking the breach to the injury, and damages or harm that result. Libel refers to false statements written about someone that harm their reputation, not to a failure to meet legal standards of care. Malpractice is professional negligence—the specific kind of negligence that involves a professional's failure to meet the standards of their profession. Liability is the legal responsibility for one's acts or omissions, which can arise from negligent conduct but is the broader status of being legally responsible rather than a description of the conduct itself.

3. Which term describes the values and ethical principles guiding nursing practice, conduct, and relationships?

- A. Autonomy**
- B. Morals**
- C. Nursing ethics**
- D. Personal ethics**

The values and ethical principles guiding nursing practice, conduct, and relationships are described by nursing ethics. This field provides the organized framework that professional nurses use to make decisions, address ethical dilemmas, and govern behaviors in patient care, including how to respect autonomy, ensure beneficence and nonmaleficence, protect confidentiality, and maintain professional boundaries. While autonomy refers to a patient's right to make their own choices and personal morals or ethics refer to individual beliefs, nursing ethics is the formal, profession-wide guide that shapes how nurses act in all aspects of practice. It's documented in codes of ethics and professional standards that define how nurses should interact with patients, families, and colleagues and uphold accountability and justice in care.

4. Which term designates a health care proxy authorized to make medical decisions for a patient who cannot speak for themselves?

- A. Durable Medical Power of Attorney**
- B. Duty**
- C. End-of-Life Principles**
- D. Felony**

A health care proxy is someone you appoint to make medical decisions when you can't speak for yourself. The term that designates this role is a durable medical power of attorney, a legal document that names your chosen agent and authorizes them to make medical decisions on your behalf. The word "durable" means the authority lasts even if you become incapacitated. This is distinct from a general power of attorney (which may cover finances) and from unrelated terms like duty, end-of-life principles, or felony, which do not identify a medical decision-maker. In practice, the agent follows your known wishes and complies with the law and any advance directives.

5. Breach of duty is defined as which of the following?

- A. Failure to meet the standard of care by omission or commission**
- B. Informed consent not obtained**
- C. Assault or battery**
- D. Privacy violation**

Breach of duty means the nurse did not meet the standard of care expected in the profession, either by not acting when action is required or by taking an action that falls short. The standard of care is what a reasonably prudent nurse would do in similar circumstances, based on training, evidence, and patient safety policies. When this standard is not met, and that deviation causes harm or risk of harm to the patient, it constitutes a breach. This concept is one element of negligence: there was a duty to the patient, a breach of that duty, causation linking the breach to harm (or risk of harm), and damages. For example, failing to monitor a patient after medication administration or giving the wrong dose are breaches of the standard of care because they represent deviations from what a competent nurse would do in those situations. The other options describe separate issues. Not obtaining informed consent relates to autonomy and the patient's right to be informed before treatment. Assault or battery refers to unlawful or unwanted physical contact. A privacy violation concerns confidentiality. Each is important, but they describe different legal/ethical concerns, not the general definition of breach of duty.

6. Which term refers to independence and the freedom to choose?

- A. Autonomy**
- B. Beneficence**
- C. Morals**
- D. Nursing ethics**

Autonomy is the idea of independence and the freedom to choose. In nursing ethics, it means recognizing and honoring a patient's right to make their own decisions about their care, as long as they have the capacity to do so and are offered clear, complete information to inform those decisions. This includes obtaining informed consent and supporting the patient's values and preferences even when they differ from what the clinician would prefer. Beneficence focuses on acting for the patient's good or best interest, which is not the same as freedom to decide. Morals are a person's own beliefs about right and wrong, which can influence decisions but do not define the patient's right to choose. Nursing ethics is the broader framework that guides professional practice, whereas autonomy specifically centers on the patient's independence and decision-making rights.

7. Which term represents the principles that guide end-of-life care?

- A. Euthanasia
- B. End-of-Life Principles**
- C. Institutional Liability
- D. Good Samaritan Act

End-of-life care decisions are guided by a specific set of principles that emphasize honoring patient autonomy, comfort, beneficence, nonmaleficence, and clear communication, often including respect for advance directives and goals of care. The term that names this guiding framework is End-of-Life Principles, which signals a structured approach to decisions about treatments, withholding or withdrawing interventions, and ensuring dignity at the end of life. Euthanasia describes an act that ends life to relieve suffering, not a guiding framework. Institutional liability concerns the legal accountability of a healthcare organization. The Good Samaritan Act provides protection for individuals who assist in emergencies, not a framework for end-of-life decision making.

8. Which statement defines physician-assisted suicide?

- A. A form of euthanasia in which a doctor provides the means for someone to end his or her own life.**
- B. A care approach where nurses supervise patient comfort measures.
- C. A legal requirement for physicians to report end-of-life.
- D. A government program funding hospice.

Physician-assisted suicide is defined by the physician providing the means for the patient to end their own life, with the patient performing the final act themselves. The key feature is that the physician supplies what is needed, but the patient self-administers, distinguishing it from scenarios where the clinician directly administers a lethal dose to end life. This helps you see why the other statements don't fit: one describes palliative or comfort-focused care, where nurses oversee measures to keep the patient comfortable rather than end life; another speaks to reporting requirements at end of life, not the act itself; and the last refers to hospice funding, which is about care settings and supports rather than the act of assisted dying.

9. In pediatric care, which concept allows families to indicate treatment preferences when the patient cannot decide?

- A. Informed Consent**
- B. Authorized Consent**
- C. Durable Power of Attorney**
- D. Advance Directives**

Documenting future treatment preferences so care can reflect those wishes when the patient cannot decide is the concept at play. Advance directives are legal tools that let a person outline what medical interventions they want or don't want if they become unable to communicate or make decisions. In pediatric care, families often act as the decision-maker for a child, guiding treatment in line with the child's best interests and family values. Having advance directives helps ensure that care aligns with the patient's values even when the child cannot articulate preferences at the moment. This concept differs from informed consent, which is the process of obtaining permission for a present or proposed treatment with information about risks and benefits; from authorized consent, who is authorized to consent on behalf of the patient at that time; and from a durable power of attorney, which designates an agent to make decisions for the patient in a broader sense. The advance directive approach focuses on pre-stated preferences to guide decisions when decision-making capacity is lacking, making it the best fit for this scenario.

10. Which term refers to a moral or legal obligation to provide care in an acceptable way?

- A. HIPAA**
- B. Informed Consent**
- C. Duty**
- D. General (Implied) Consent**

Duty means a moral or legal obligation to provide care in an acceptable way. In nursing, this obligation comes from the professional-patient relationship and is supported by ethical codes and state law. It requires you to perform competently, keep the patient safe, and act in the patient's best interests within your scope of practice. If you don't meet this standard and harm results, the duty can underlie legal liability for negligence or malpractice. HIPAA governs privacy and confidentiality, not the obligation to provide care. Informed consent is about the patient's right to know and voluntarily agree to treatment, not the ongoing obligation to deliver care. General (implied) consent relates to permission in emergencies when the patient cannot consent, not the broader duty to provide care in an acceptable manner.

Next Steps

Congratulations on reaching the final section of this guide. You've taken a meaningful step toward passing your certification exam and advancing your career.

As you continue preparing, remember that consistent practice, review, and self-reflection are key to success. Make time to revisit difficult topics, simulate exam conditions, and track your progress along the way.

If you need help, have suggestions, or want to share feedback, we'd love to hear from you. Reach out to our team at hello@examzify.com.

Or visit your dedicated course page for more study tools and resources:

<https://nursingethicsandlaw.examzify.com>

We wish you the very best on your exam journey. You've got this!

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