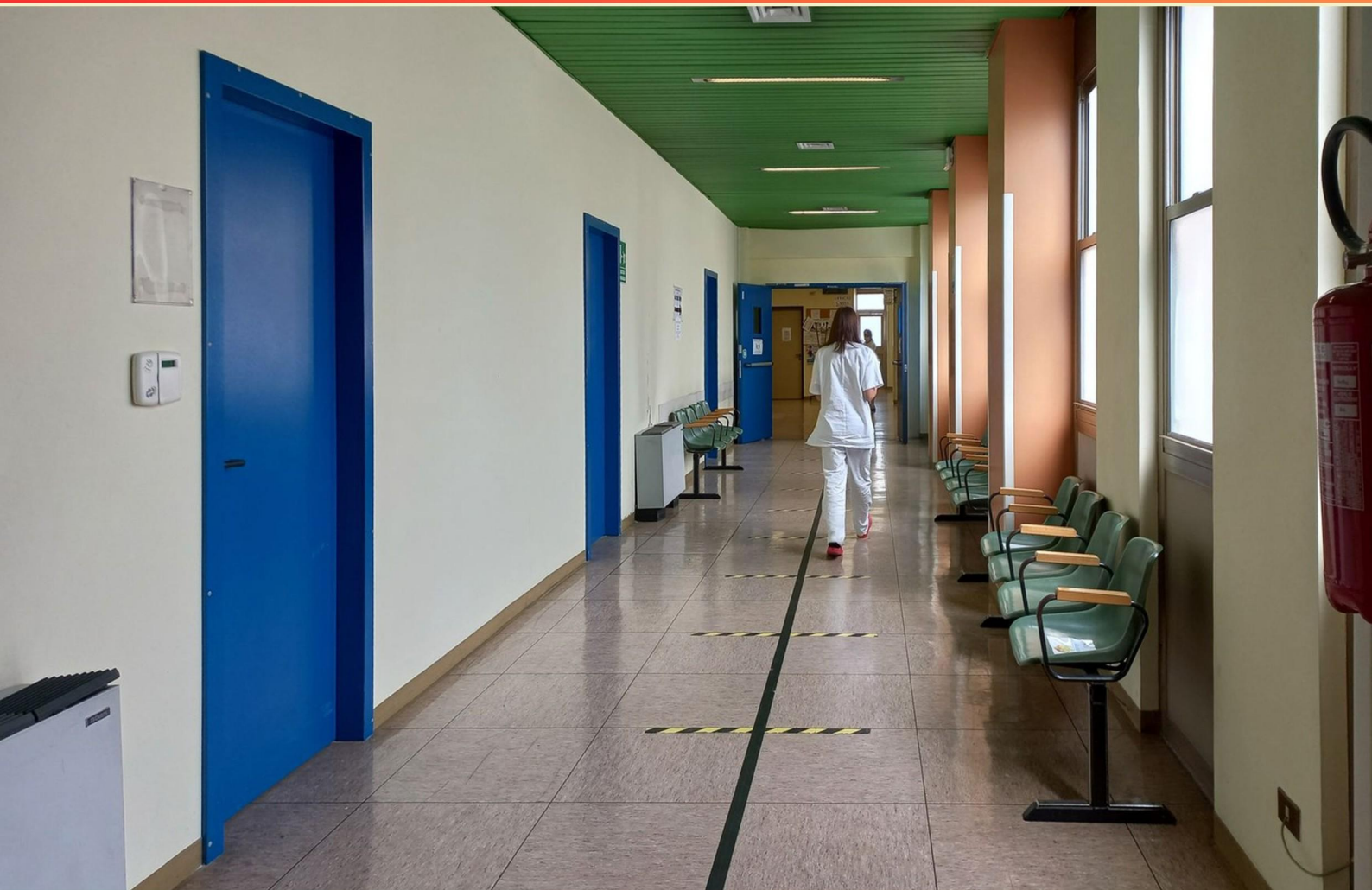


NURSING ETHICS AND LAW PRACTICE EXAM (SAMPLE)

STUDY GUIDE



SAMPLE STUDY GUIDE WITH LIMITED QUESTIONS

VISIT US ONLINE FOR
THE FULL VERSION STUDY GUIDE

<https://nursingethicsandlaw.examzify.com>



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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. When should a nurse seek ethics consultation?**
 - A. In complex cases with ethical dilemmas, conflicting values, or moral distress.
 - B. Only after a legal complaint is filed.
 - C. Never needed in routine care.
 - D. Only for administrative policy disputes.
- 2. In a patient with fluctuating decision-making capacity who asks to leave the hospital against medical advice, who should decide if capacity is uncertain?**
 - A. The treating physician alone.
 - B. A legally authorized decision-maker or surrogate who bases decisions on known values.
 - C. The patient regardless of capacity.
 - D. The ethics committee only.
- 3. Which practice best protects patient confidentiality when nurses use social media?**
 - A. Share anonymized case details to educate peers
 - B. Post patient stories with consent
 - C. Follow institutional policies but disclose limited details
 - D. Do not disclose patient information, avoid identifying details, maintain professional persona, follow institutional policies, and avoid posting about cases
- 4. During a life-threatening emergency, what should a nurse do as soon as feasible after initial treatment?**
 - A. Continue treatment without consent
 - B. Obtain consent for ongoing treatment
 - C. Seek a court order
 - D. Notify the ethics committee
- 5. Which term refers to the duty to do no harm?**
 - A. Beneficence
 - B. Autonomy
 - C. Justice
 - D. Nonmaleficence

- 6. Nursing ethics encompasses which of the following?**
- A. the values and ethical principles governing nursing practice, conduct, and relationships
 - B. personal guidelines for living
 - C. beliefs about what is right or wrong
 - D. the duties of legal compliance
- 7. Which document describes the medical treatments a person would want if seriously or terminally ill?**
- A. Living Will
 - B. Misdemeanor
 - C. Liability
 - D. Malpractice
- 8. What is a verdict in a legal proceeding?**
- A. A formal decision by a court on guilt or liability
 - B. A summary of evidence presented at trial
 - C. A remedy ordered by a judge to compensate a party
 - D. An administrative decision issued by the hospital board
- 9. What is conscientious objection in nursing, and how should it be managed?**
- A. Refusal to participate in procedures conflicting with moral beliefs; must provide safe alternative, avoid abandoning patient, and follow policy to minimize harm.
 - B. Refusal means leaving the patient without care entirely.
 - C. Conscience objections are not allowed.
 - D. Must always comply with the procedure regardless of beliefs.
- 10. Distinguish between an advance directive and a living will and how each guides care.**
- A. A living will outlines future treatment preferences and appoints a proxy.
 - B. An advance directive lists life-sustaining treatments to be used only.
 - C. An advance directive outlines treatment preferences and appoints a proxy; a living will specifies which life-sustaining treatments should be used or withheld; surrogates apply when needed.
 - D. A living will substitutes the patient's own judgment for all decisions.

Answers

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

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Explanations

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1. When should a nurse seek ethics consultation?

- A. In complex cases with ethical dilemmas, conflicting values, or moral distress.
- B. Only after a legal complaint is filed.
- C. Never needed in routine care.
- D. Only for administrative policy disputes.

Seek ethics consultation whenever care involves ethically challenging questions that go beyond routine practice and require sorting through conflicting values, duties, or patient preferences. The ethics team helps the nurse, patient, family, and care team examine the ethical dimensions—such as autonomy, beneficence, nonmaleficence, and justice—and aligns decisions with what matters to the patient while respecting legal and institutional policies. This service is especially valuable when moral distress arises—when you know the ethically appropriate action but feel constrained by circumstances, policy, or disagreement within the team—and you need support to find a morally defensible plan. Situations that fit include end-of-life decisions, capacity assessments and surrogate decision-making, reconciling different cultural or religious values, conflicts among patient, family, and staff, and complex resource considerations. It's not limited to legal complaints, and it's not only for routine care or administrative policy disputes; it's a resource for navigating ethically intricate cases from the outset.

2. In a patient with fluctuating decision-making capacity who asks to leave the hospital against medical advice, who should decide if capacity is uncertain?

- A. The treating physician alone.
- B. A legally authorized decision-maker or surrogate who bases decisions on known values.
- C. The patient regardless of capacity.
- D. The ethics committee only.

When capacity is uncertain, decisions should be guided by a multidisciplinary, neutral process that weighs the patient's values, understanding, and the risks of the decision. Capacity is decision-specific and can fluctuate, especially in a patient who asks to leave the hospital against medical advice. An ethics committee brings together diverse professional perspectives to assess whether the patient truly has the ability to understand the consequences, appreciate the situation, reason about options, and communicate a choice for this particular decision at this moment. This approach protects patient autonomy while ensuring safety and lawful practice, and it provides clear, documented guidance for next steps, such as clarifying the patient's wishes, arranging re-evaluation of capacity, or involving a surrogate if capacity is determined to be lacking. Relying on a single clinician's judgment in the face of uncertainty can introduce bias or missed considerations, whereas an ethics consultation offers a structured framework to address the ethical and legal implications of an AMA decision.

3. Which practice best protects patient confidentiality when nurses use social media?

- A. Share anonymized case details to educate peers
- B. Post patient stories with consent
- C. Follow institutional policies but disclose limited details
- D. Do not disclose patient information, avoid identifying details, maintain professional persona, follow institutional policies, and avoid posting about cases**

Protecting patient confidentiality means keeping patient information out of social media entirely and sticking to professional, policy-guided conduct online. The most protective practice is to avoid disclosing any patient information, refrain from posting about individual cases, avoid identifying details, maintain a professional online persona, and follow institutional policies. This combination minimizes the risk that a post could reveal who a patient is or share data that could be pieced together to identify someone, which is why it's the strongest safeguard. Even well-intentioned options can fall short. Sharing anonymized case details can still risk identification when those details are combined with other information in a post. Posting patient stories with consent relies on the quality and scope of that consent and can be vulnerable to withdrawal or misunderstanding. Following policies with only limited details may still permit disclosures that are inappropriate in context. The safest, most consistent protection is to avoid posting about patients altogether and to rely on institution-approved, de-identified materials when education or discussion is needed.

4. During a life-threatening emergency, what should a nurse do as soon as feasible after initial treatment?

- A. Continue treatment without consent
- B. Obtain consent for ongoing treatment**
- C. Seek a court order
- D. Notify the ethics committee

In emergencies you can act to save a life without consent, but once the patient is stabilized and capable, you must obtain informed consent for ongoing treatment. This respects the patient's autonomy and legal rights by ensuring they participate in decisions about their care after the immediate danger has passed. If the patient cannot decide, a legally authorized surrogate or advance directive should guide ongoing decisions. Delaying care to seek a court order or routinely involving the ethics committee is not appropriate for standard post-emergency decisions, and continuing treatment without consent would violate autonomy.

5. Which term refers to the duty to do no harm?

- A. Beneficence
- B. Autonomy
- C. Justice
- D. Nonmaleficence**

Nonmaleficence is the obligation to do no harm. In nursing practice this means avoiding actions or omissions that could injure a patient, and actively working to prevent harm from care. It guides everyday decisions like double-checking a medication dose, using safe procedures to prevent falls, and monitoring for adverse effects so problems can be addressed promptly. The idea is to minimize risk and protect patients from unnecessary harm. This principle sits alongside beneficence, which is about doing good, but they are not the same. Beneficence focuses on promoting the patient's welfare, while nonmaleficence centers on avoiding harm. Autonomy refers to respecting a patient's right to make their own decisions, and justice concerns fair and equitable treatment. When harm cannot be avoided, clinicians strive to minimize it and weigh risks and benefits to choose the option that causes the least harm while still aiming to provide benefit.

6. Nursing ethics encompasses which of the following?

- A. the values and ethical principles governing nursing practice, conduct, and relationships**
- B. personal guidelines for living
- C. beliefs about what is right or wrong
- D. the duties of legal compliance

Nursing ethics centers on the values and ethical principles that guide how nurses practice, conduct themselves, and relate to patients and colleagues. This professional framework shapes how you make decisions, protect patient rights, maintain confidentiality, obtain informed consent, advocate for vulnerable individuals, and navigate relationships within the care team. It goes beyond personal morals or general ideas about right and wrong, because it provides a structured set of standards specifically for professional nursing practice. While the law requires certain actions, ethics covers the broader obligation to act in patients' best interests and to uphold professional responsibilities, which can require more than what the law dictates. So the values and principles that govern nursing practice, conduct, and relationships best capture what nursing ethics encompasses.

7. Which document describes the medical treatments a person would want if seriously or terminally ill?

- A. Living Will**
- B. Misdemeanor
- C. Liability
- D. Malpractice

Understanding advance directives and end-of-life care preferences helps ensure a person's wishes are respected when they can't speak for themselves. A living will is a written document where a person states which medical treatments they want or do not want if they become seriously ill or terminal and cannot communicate. It guides clinicians and family about whether to pursue or withhold life-sustaining measures, such as resuscitation, mechanical ventilation, or artificial nutrition and hydration, according to the individual's choices. It's important to note that a living will outlines treatment preferences, while other documents (like a durable power of attorney for healthcare) designate who should make decisions if the person becomes unable to do so. The other terms are legal concepts not describing patient treatment preferences: a misdemeanor is a criminal offense, liability concerns responsibility in civil law, and malpractice involves professional negligence. So, the document that describes the medical treatments a person would want if seriously or terminally ill is the living will.

8. What is a verdict in a legal proceeding?

- A. A formal decision by a court on guilt or liability**
- B. A summary of evidence presented at trial
- C. A remedy ordered by a judge to compensate a party
- D. An administrative decision issued by the hospital board

A verdict is the formal decision issued by a court at the end of a trial, determining whether the defendant is guilty in a criminal case or liable in a civil case. This decision is reached after the fact-finding process—the jury (or a judge in a bench trial) weighs the evidence presented and applies the relevant law. It isn't a summary of what happened, nor is it the remedy or punishment itself; rather, it states the outcome of responsibility. Once a verdict is delivered, the court typically follows with a judgment that specifies the consequences, such as a sentence or the awarding of damages. The other descriptions describe records, remedies, or administrative decisions, which are not the outcome of the trial's determination of responsibility.

9. What is conscientious objection in nursing, and how should it be managed?

- A. Refusal to participate in procedures conflicting with moral beliefs; must provide safe alternative, avoid abandoning patient, and follow policy to minimize harm.
- B. Refusal means leaving the patient without care entirely.
- C. Conscience objections are not allowed.
- D. Must always comply with the procedure regardless of beliefs.

Conscientious objection in nursing means choosing not to participate in a procedure that conflicts with one's moral or religious beliefs, while still ensuring the patient receives safe, appropriate care. It's managed by clear, early communication and a well established plan that protects both the nurse's integrity and the patient's welfare. That plan typically includes informing a supervisor or ethics resource, arranging a safe alternative care option, and not abandoning the patient. Nurses should follow organizational policies and professional codes, document the objection and the steps taken, and refer or transfer care to another qualified clinician who can provide the service. The aim is to balance the nurse's right to moral integrity with the patient's right to timely, competent care, maintaining safety and continuity of care. Actions like leaving the patient without care, claiming objections are not allowed, or insisting on compliance regardless of beliefs do not protect patient welfare or the nurse's professional responsibilities.

10. Distinguish between an advance directive and a living will and how each guides care.

- A. A living will outlines future treatment preferences and appoints a proxy.
- B. An advance directive lists life-sustaining treatments to be used only.
- C. An advance directive outlines treatment preferences and appoints a proxy; a living will specifies which life-sustaining treatments should be used or withheld; surrogates apply when needed.
- D. A living will substitutes the patient's own judgment for all decisions.

The main idea is that advance directives and living wills are both about guiding care when you can't speak for yourself, but they serve different roles. An advance directive is a broad document that records your treatment preferences and also appoints a healthcare proxy or surrogate to make decisions on your behalf when you lack capacity. A living will is a more specific instruction about which life-sustaining treatments should be used or withheld in particular situations, such as terminal illness or permanent unconsciousness. When decisions need to be made, surrogates step in to apply the patient's wishes, especially if there is no directive or the situation isn't covered by the living will. This option correctly captures both elements: the advance directive sets overall treatment goals and designates who will decide, while the living will details which life-sustaining treatments to use or withhold. It also notes that surrogates come into play when decisions are needed. The other descriptions are narrower or inaccurate: one portrays a living will as appointing a proxy, which it does not inherently do; another narrows an advance directive to life-sustaining treatments only; and a statement that a living will substitutes the patient's own judgment for all decisions isn't accurate, since the purpose is to reflect the patient's preferences, often through a surrogate when the patient can't decide.

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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