

Physician Assistant (PA) Professionalism Practice Test (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. What important accomplishment did NYSSPA achieve?**
 - A. Created a statewide medical student scholarship**
 - B. Implemented a new hospital credentialing system**
 - C. Expanded PA practice by removing age restrictions**
 - D. Successfully lobbied for the legislative removal of the 24 hour countersignature requirements for PAs**

- 2. How/why did the PA program get started?**
 - A. To reduce healthcare costs by eliminating physicians**
 - B. To replace nurses in clinics**
 - C. To improve and expand healthcare due to shortage of primary care physicians**
 - D. To create competition among healthcare workers**

- 3. How can a PA contribute to reducing health literacy barriers in patient education?**
 - A. Use medical jargon to be precise.**
 - B. Use plain language, teach-back, visual aids, and verify understanding.**
 - C. Rely only on patient questions.**
 - D. Assume patients understand complex explanations.**

- 4. Which statement best describes the role of consent in patient safety and quality of care?**
 - A. It is solely a legal requirement with no impact on care.**
 - B. It supports patient autonomy, informs decisions, and can limit liability when properly documented.**
 - C. It is only needed for high-risk procedures.**
 - D. It can be skipped if the patient seems capable.**

- 5. Which example reflects a JACHO responsibility?**
 - A. Identifying the patient in the hospital**
 - B. Hand washing guidelines use from the CDC**
 - C. Labeling medications**
 - D. Documentation of correct body part in surgery**

- 6. Which CME category is subject to NCCPA audit?**
- A. Category 1 only**
 - B. Category 2 only**
 - C. Both Category 1 and Category 2**
 - D. Neither**
- 7. Which of the following is NOT a stated function of ARC-PA?**
- A. Establish educational standards utilizing broad-based input**
 - B. Define and administer the process for comprehensive review of applicant programs**
 - C. Determine if PA programs are in compliance with the established standards**
 - D. Grant licensure to individual PA practitioners**
- 8. Define a conflict of interest and how a PA should address it in practice.**
- A. A conflict between personal and professional interests unrelated to patient care.**
 - B. A routine scheduling conflict.**
 - C. A situation where personal interests could influence professional judgment; disclose to supervisor and recuse from decisions when needed.**
 - D. A minor disagreement about treatment goals.**
- 9. What helps ensure equitable care for patients with limited English proficiency?**
- A. Provide care without interpreter services.**
 - B. Ensure access to interpreter services and translated materials.**
 - C. Only communicate with family members.**
 - D. Use ad-hoc translation apps.**
- 10. In involving family in prognosis discussions, which statement best reflects best practice?**
- A. Involve family in all decisions regardless of patient wishes.**
 - B. Never involve family under any circumstances.**
 - C. Involve family only when the patient cannot speak.**
 - D. Involve family as appropriate, respecting patient preferences and autonomy.**

Answers

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

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Explanations

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1. What important accomplishment did NYSSPA achieve?

- A. Created a statewide medical student scholarship
- B. Implemented a new hospital credentialing system
- C. Expanded PA practice by removing age restrictions
- D. Successfully lobbied for the legislative removal of the 24 hour countersignature requirements for PAs**

Advocacy and policy change that expand a physician assistant's ability to practice is a major way professional groups improve day-to-day care. Removing the 24-hour countersignature requirement in New York means a PA can proceed with patient care in a timely, autonomous, and supervised way without waiting for a physician to retroactively countersign within a tight deadline. This acknowledges the PA's competence and supervision plan, reduces unnecessary delays, and improves access to care for patients. That's why this achievement stands out. It directly changes how PAs can deliver care under the law, rather than altering hospital procedures, creating scholarships, or expanding scope in a way that isn't tied to a specific legislative win.

2. How/why did the PA program get started?

- A. To reduce healthcare costs by eliminating physicians
- B. To replace nurses in clinics
- C. To improve and expand healthcare due to shortage of primary care physicians**
- D. To create competition among healthcare workers

The reason PA programs began was to expand access to care by addressing the shortage of primary care physicians, using a team-based approach. In the 1960s, the first program at Duke University was created under the vision of Dr. Eugene Stead to train individuals who could handle essential medical tasks under a physician's supervision. They started by enrolling experienced non-physician clinicians, like former military corpsmen, to extend the reach of primary care. The goal wasn't to replace physicians or nurses or to create competition, but to augment the physician workforce and improve patient access, especially in underserved areas. Over time, PAs have become integral in many settings, expanding capacity and allowing more patients to receive timely care while collaborating closely with physicians.

3. How can a PA contribute to reducing health literacy barriers in patient education?

A. Use medical jargon to be precise.

B. Use plain language, teach-back, visual aids, and verify understanding.

C. Rely only on patient questions.

D. Assume patients understand complex explanations.

Clear, patient-centered communication with strategies to ensure understanding is essential to reduce health literacy barriers in patient education. Using plain language replaces medical jargon with everyday terms, making explanations more accessible and less intimidating for patients. Teach-back, where the patient repeats the information in their own words, helps uncover misunderstandings that might not be evident otherwise and gives the clinician a chance to correct them on the spot. Visual aids such as diagrams, pictures, and step-by-step illustrations reinforce understanding and aid memory, especially for individuals with limited literacy or language barriers. Verifying that the patient truly understands the plan, risks, benefits, and instructions before concluding the encounter ensures that information has been retained and can be acted on. Jargon tends to confuse rather than clarify, and relying only on patient questions is passive and may miss gaps in understanding. Assuming patients understand complex explanations similarly overestimates comprehension and can lead to poor adherence.

4. Which statement best describes the role of consent in patient safety and quality of care?

A. It is solely a legal requirement with no impact on care.

B. It supports patient autonomy, informs decisions, and can limit liability when properly documented.

C. It is only needed for high-risk procedures.

D. It can be skipped if the patient seems capable.

Consent is a process that protects patient safety by ensuring patients understand and agree to what will be done to them, and that care aligns with their values and preferences. It supports patient autonomy by enabling informed, voluntary decisions, where risks, benefits, and alternatives are explained and questions are answered. When the discussion is properly documented, it provides a clear record that the patient was informed and consented, which can reduce liability if outcomes are questioned. This approach applies to most medical interventions, not just high-risk procedures, and it requires assessing the patient's capacity and treating consent as an ongoing conversation rather than a one-time form.

5. Which example reflects a JACHO responsibility?

- A. Identifying the patient in the hospital**
- B. Hand washing guidelines use from the CDC**
- C. Labeling medications**
- D. Documentation of correct body part in surgery**

The key idea is that The Joint Commission emphasizes implementing infection prevention practices that are based on established, external guidelines, such as those from the CDC. Hand hygiene is the cornerstone of infection control, and hospitals are expected to adopt and enforce CDC hand hygiene guidelines to protect patients. This shows Joint Commission responsibility in translating authoritative, evidence-based recommendations into actual hospital practice. While identifying patients, labeling medications, and documenting the correct body part for surgery are all important patient-safety actions, they are typically governed by internal policies and universal protocols rather than the specific act of adopting externally published guidelines as the basis for practice. The choice reflecting adherence to a national, evidence-based guideline—the CDC hand hygiene recommendations—best demonstrates the Joint Commission’s role in ensuring practices are grounded in widely accepted standards.

6. Which CME category is subject to NCCPA audit?

- A. Category 1 only**
- B. Category 2 only**
- C. Both Category 1 and Category 2**
- D. Neither**

Audits target the credits that are verifiable and standardized. Category 1 CME comes from ACCME-accredited providers and has documented, verifiable records you can check during an audit. Category 2 CME, on the other hand, covers self-directed learning and lacks the same level of verification, so NCCPA does not routinely audit these credits. Because of that, only Category 1 credits are subject to NCCPA audit.

7. Which of the following is NOT a stated function of ARC-PA?

- A. Establish educational standards utilizing broad-based input**
- B. Define and administer the process for comprehensive review of applicant programs**
- C. Determine if PA programs are in compliance with the established standards**
- D. Grant licensure to individual PA practitioners**

ARC-PA accredits PA educational programs, guiding how they should educate students and how programs are evaluated. It develops educational standards with broad input from educators, clinicians, and others, and then administers the process to review programs for compliance with those standards. It also oversees ongoing quality assurance through accreditation decisions and reviews. Licensing individual PA practitioners, however, is not within ARC-PA’s role; that responsibility lies with state licensing boards (and the certification process that precedes licensure). So the statement about granting licensure to individual PAs is not a function of ARC-PA.

8. Define a conflict of interest and how a PA should address it in practice.

- A. A conflict between personal and professional interests unrelated to patient care.**
- B. A routine scheduling conflict.**
- C. A situation where personal interests could influence professional judgment; disclose to supervisor and recuse from decisions when needed.**
- D. A minor disagreement about treatment goals.**

A conflict of interest occurs when personal interests could reasonably influence professional judgment or decision-making, creating a risk that patient care or ethical standards could be compromised or misperceived as compromised. In practice, a PA should act to protect patient welfare by recognizing the conflict and disclosing it to the appropriate supervisor or ethics body, then recusing from decisions where the conflict could influence outcomes. If disclosure occurs, steps should be taken to involve an independent decision-maker or alternative arrangement, and all actions should be documented in line with institutional policies and professional guidelines. The emphasis is on transparency and preserving trust and patient-centered care. Routine scheduling conflicts are administrative and do not involve influence over clinical judgment. A minor disagreement about treatment goals, while clinically relevant, reflects a difference of clinical opinion rather than a personal interest that could bias judgment.

9. What helps ensure equitable care for patients with limited English proficiency?

- A. Provide care without interpreter services.**
- B. Ensure access to interpreter services and translated materials.**
- C. Only communicate with family members.**
- D. Use ad-hoc translation apps.**

Ensuring equitable care hinges on effective communication with patients who have limited English proficiency. Providing access to professional interpreter services and translated materials best supports understanding, informed consent, and adherence to treatment, thereby reducing disparities. Professional interpreters—whether in person, by video, or by phone—preserve accuracy and confidentiality and help clinicians avoid miscommunications that can occur when relying on family members or ad-hoc translation apps. Translated written materials and teach-back confirmation further ensure the patient grasps the plan, risks, benefits, and instructions. Together, these practices promote patient autonomy and safety and align with language-access and non-discrimination principles.

10. In involving family in prognosis discussions, which statement best reflects best practice?

A. Involve family in all decisions regardless of patient wishes.

B. Never involve family under any circumstances.

C. Involve family only when the patient cannot speak.

D. Involve family as appropriate, respecting patient preferences and autonomy.

Involving family in prognosis discussions hinges on honoring the patient's voice while recognizing when support from loved ones is helpful. The best practice is to involve family as appropriate, respecting patient preferences and autonomy. This means you start by asking the patient whom they want involved and to what extent they want information shared, and you tailor the discussion accordingly. If the patient wants family present and informed, you include them and explain prognosis in a way that aligns with the patient's wishes. If the patient prefers to keep details private or wants limited involvement from family, you honor that and proceed with the patient's instructions. When a patient cannot speak or lacks decision-making capacity, you follow a valid surrogate or advance directive to guide who is involved and what information is shared, always aiming to act in the patient's best interests and to maintain confidentiality. This approach prevents overriding the patient's autonomy, avoids unnecessary disclosure that could cause harm or distress, and supports the patient and family in shared decision-making. It's flexible and patient-centered, rather than rigid, which is why it best reflects appropriate practice.

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://paprofessionalism.examzify.com>

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

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