



ATI Next Generation NCLEX (NGN) Proctored Exam Timing FAQ

A. How does ATI plan to adjust allotted proctored assessment time for exams that contain NGN items?

ATI exam time limits are designed to allow approximately one minute for classic item types (e.g. single select multiple choice, hot spot) and two minutes for each Next Generation NCLEX clinical judgment item. The total exam time does not include breaks students might take; meaning that when a student pushes the “pause” button, the time allotted for reading, considering, and responding to exam questions stops counting down and does not restart until the “pause” is complete. ATI does this to ensure that students are guaranteed the full time allotted to take the test.

The following table shows the current exam time and the exam time that will be applicable when the scored NGN items are included.

Assessment	Current Time in Mins	New Time in Mins
RN Comprehensive Predictor	180	240
RN Fundamentals	70	90
RN Adult Medical Surgical	100	120
RN Nursing Care of Children	70	90
RN Mental Health	70	90
RN Maternal Newborn	70	90
PN Comprehensive Predictor	180	240
PN Fundamentals	70	90
PN Mental Health	60	80
PN Maternal Newborn	60	80
PN Nursing Care of Children	70	90
PN Adult Medical Surgical	100	120

B. Why is ATI adjusting the exam time limit, if the NCSBN is not?

Historically, ATI has allowed 1 minute per item, per assessment, while the NCSBN has allowed 2-4 minutes per item (range due to NCLEX being a variable length test). Our data shows it is taking students longer than 1 minute to answer NGN items; therefore, to be more aligned with the NCSBN and set students up for success, we will be increasing NGN exams to allow 2 minutes per NGN item.



C. When will increased exam time for scored NGN items be implemented?

Versions of RN and PN Content Mastery Series and Comprehensive Predictor with scored NGN items will be available for client use by January 1, 2023. The new exam times (shown above) will be implemented when they are released.

D. When will scored NGN items be implemented on ATI proctored exams?

Scored NGN items will be introduced by January 1, 2023.

E. Will schools have the option of administering exams with only non-scored NGN items?

Prior to the release of 2023 exams, ATI will provide proctored exams with and without scored NGN items. We are providing this option so that students gain experience with NGN items without performance on NGN items contributing to the student's exam score. Please note: NGN items may appear in the pre-test portion of all exams.

Upon the release of 2023 exams (with test plan updates), the option to administer proctored exams without scored NGN items, will be retired.

F. How did ATI decide to add only one additional minute per NGN item (two minutes total) for each NGN item?

As ATI has included NGN items for research and pretesting to evaluate implementation and performance, psychometrics has performed analysis to assess how long students are actually spending on each item and each item type. This information was used to determine the appropriate amount of time per NGN item for proctored exams.

Additionally, the NCSBN's research shows that students will spend 1-2 minutes per NGN item.¹

G. How can ATI be sure the allotted time is sufficient for students to complete the exam?

To ensure students have sufficient time to complete the exams within the given time limit, psychometrics monitors several statistics² including, but not limited to, the percentage of students responding to the last item, the percentage of students completing at least 75% of the exam, and what is called a "speededness quotient." The results consistently indicate that students' scores are not impacted in a meaningful way



by the amount of time allowed. This is true for exams with and without NGN items. This indicates that the time provided for students to complete their exams is sufficient. Table 1 provides this information for the RN 2019 CMS and CP assessments.

Table 1. *Speededness Statistics for RN Content Mastery Series and Comprehensive Predictor Exams*

Exam	% of students answering		Speededness Quotient
	the last item	at least 75% of items	
RN Content Mastery Series			
Adult Medical Surgical	99.54%	100.00%	0.00
Community Health	99.42%	100.00%	0.00
Fundamentals	98.16%	100.00%	0.00
Leadership	99.50%	99.99%	0.00
Maternal Newborn	99.42%	100.00%	0.00
Mental Health	99.67%	100.00%	0.00
Nursing Care of Children	99.73%	100.00%	0.00
Nutrition	99.52%	100.00%	0.00
Pharmacology	99.55%	100.00%	0.00
RN Comprehensive Predictor	99.80%	100.00%	0.00

H. Why is there a designated time for completing the ATI proctored exams?

There are multiple reasons for implementing time limits for proctored exams. Implementing a structured, consistent exam time for each set of items does the following.

- Maintains the security of exam content by ensuring that proctored exam content is not available indefinitely for students to access. This limits the opportunity for anyone to harvest proctored exam content to share. The system “times out” to keep content secure.
- Ensures that no subgroup of students receives a benefit over another group of students. Scores students earn on proctored exams at one school can be directly compared to and used at another school (e.g., Content Mastery Series).
- Provides a standardized context for data collection. Outcomes research performed on the exam data is generalizable because the data were collected under standardized conditions.



I. Why can I not have the timing for ATI exams set to match that of other exam providers or the NCLEX?

As mentioned in FAQ A, ATI proctored exams generally have a time limit of one minute per item (including both scored and unscored, pretest items), and two minutes for NGN items. Since ATI exams are fixed-length exams, this means that all students taking the same exam have the same time allotted to complete the exam (which will range from 80 to 240 minutes for exams with NGN items depending on which ATI test is being administered). Students are also allowed to pause the timer for up to 5 minutes during the test to allow for any necessary breaks.

NCLEX[®], for comparison, is a computer adaptive, variable-length test with a fixed five-hour time limit. This five-hour time limit, “includes an introductory screen, all optional breaks, and the examination.”³ This means that students taking the NCLEX can have different time limits per item than each other, depending on the number of items they are administered and how much time they spend on activities other than the actual examination.

Based just on the time limit differences, it may appear that students are given considerably less time per item on ATI exams than they are on NCLEX. However, before reaching this conclusion it is important to consider two things.

- First, the time on ATI exams is exclusively devoted to answering items, whereas the time on NCLEX is also spent completing other activities, as discussed previously. Therefore, it is not possible to state decisively a time limit per item on NCLEX.
- Second, neither the NCLEX nor the ATI proctored exams are designed to be speeded tests. This means that time limits are imposed to ensure a standardized testing environment but that they should not interfere with a student’s ability to respond thoughtfully to each item. ATI completes extensive analyses to assess the speededness of the tests (see FAQ G above).

¹ Joe Betts, PhD, MMIS; William Muntean, PhD; Doyoung Kim, PhD & Shu-chuan Kao, PhD. (2022) Next Generation NCLEX: Test Design. NCSBN: https://www.ncsbn.org/NGN_Winter22_English_Final.pdf

² Percentage of Students Answering Items: Swineford (1974) established a very simple, if somewhat arbitrary, rule stating that if 75% of examinees answer the last item and all examinees answer at least 75% of the items, then the test can be considered unspeeded. Speededness quotient: Stafford (1971) proposed a “speededness quotient (SQ)” based on a simple ratio of the number of unreached items to total number of incorrect items (wrong, unreached, and omitted items). A purely speeded test would have an SQ of 1.0.

³ National Council of State Boards of Nursing (2019). 2019 NCLEX-RN Test Plan. Chicago, IL.