



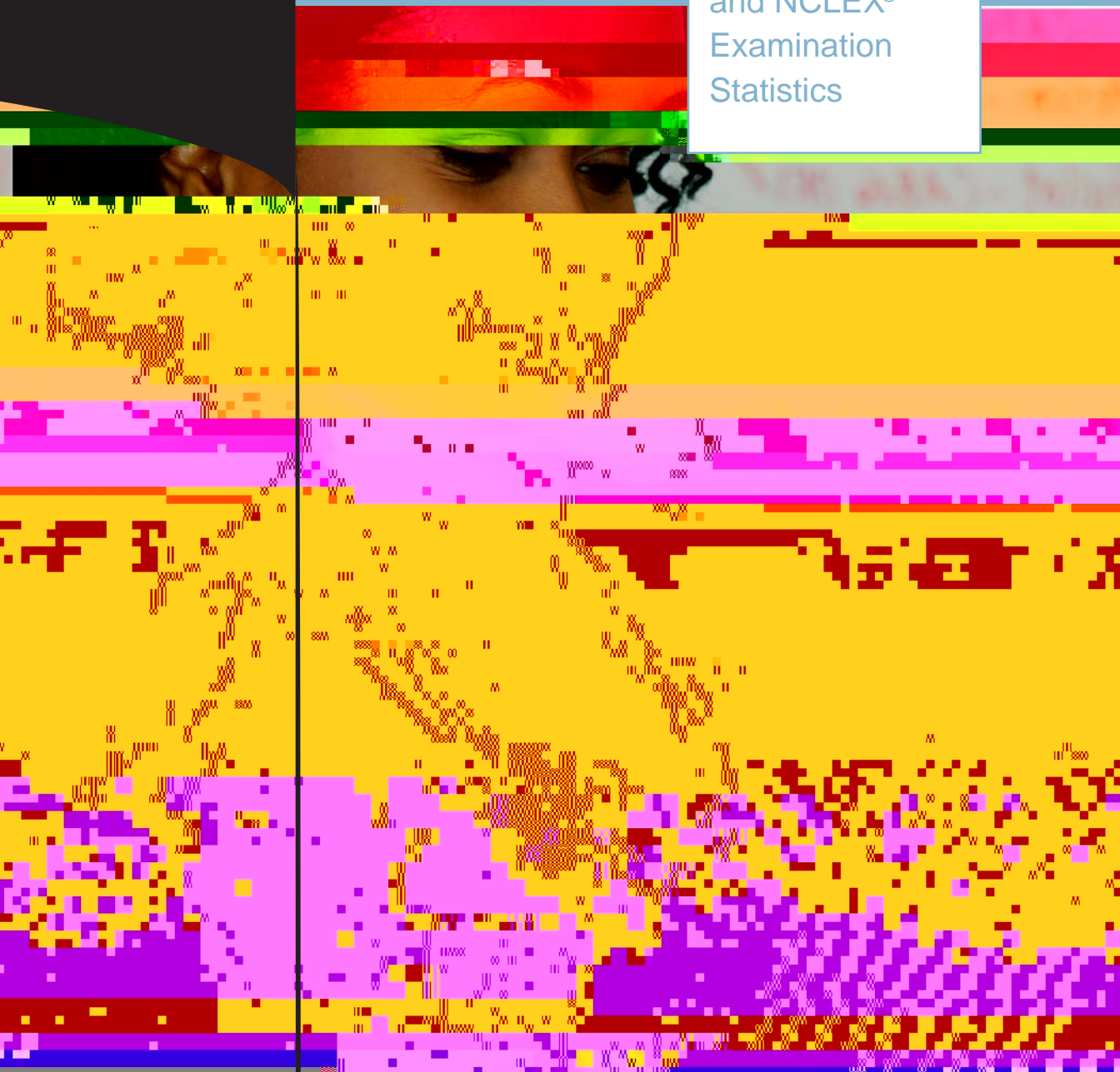
NCSBN

National Council of State Boards of Nursing

NCSBN RESEARCH BRIEF

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2009 Nurse Licensee Volume and NCLEX® Examination Statistics



2009 Nurse Licensee Volume and NCLEX[®] Examination Statistics

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National Council of State Boards of Nursing, Inc. (NCSBN[®])

Mission Statement

The National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN[®]) provides education, service and research through collaborative leadership to promote evidence-based regulatory excellence for patient safety and public protection.

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INTRODUCTION

The mission of the National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN[®]) is to provide leadership to advance regulatory excellence by assisting member boards, collectively and individually, and to promote safe and effective nursing practice in the interest of protecting public health and welfare.

NCSBN serves as a consultant, liaison, advocate and researcher to its member boards, and as an educational and informational resource to policy makers and the general public. This publication provides statistics on the licensing activities of NCSBN's member boards and its two licensure examinations: the National Council Licensure Examination for Practical Nurses (NCLEX-PN[®]) and the National Council Licensure Examination for

PART I – 2009 LICENSURE STATISTICS

The data reported in this section indicate licensure processing activity and the total number of individuals licensed to practice within each jurisdiction from July 1, 2008, to June 30, 2009. All data was obtained from state and territorial BONs.

Estimates were provided where the exact figure requested for this collection of data was unknown.

Data are presented in a series of tables. Table 1 lists the NCSBN member boards, the geographic locality where a BON has responsibility for regulating nursing practice, the types of licenses a BON has licensing authority over and whether or not the BON is empowered to issue licenses or certificates to practice in a specialty area of nursing. Tables 2 through 5 provide data related to new licenses issued by endorsement or examination, total numbers of active licenses (both registered nurse [RN] and licensed practical/vocational nurse [LPN/VN]) by jurisdiction and graduates of foreign nursing programs licensed by jurisdiction. Table 6 provides a summary of licensing activities by examination and endorsement for RNs, LPN/VNs and graduates of foreign nursing programs. Tables 7 and 8 provide the numbers of active specialty licenses issued within each jurisdiction by specialty license category. Figure 1 provides a review of the numbers of active licenses from 1999 to 2009. Unless noted otherwise, all percentages are calculated in terms of column totals.

Key Terms

Registered nurses (RNs) and licensed practical or vocational nurses (LPN/VNs) obtain licensure by endorsement (if licensed in another jurisdiction) or by examination (if the applicant has never taken the appropriate NCLEX® examination).

Active license figures are based on the reported actual or estimated total number of individuals holding an active license within a jurisdiction and represent the nurses available for employment. Due to an unknown number of individuals holding active licenses in more than one jurisdiction, the total number of active licenses nationwide may be higher than the total number of nurses.

Advanced practice licenses/authority to practice figures and tables contain data for advanced practice registered nurse (APRN) groups: certified registered nurse anesthetist (CRNA); certified nurse midwife (CNM); certified nurse specialist (CNS); CNS-PSYCH/mental health; and nurse practitioner (NP).

Table 2. RNs: New in State Functions, by Jurisdiction

JD	Examination			Endorsement			Total New in State	
	N	%		N	%		N	%
VA	3,212	2.76		2,686	3.56		5,898	2.73
WA	2,498	2.15		3,741	4.96		6,239	2.89
WI							4,793	2.22
WV-RN	947	0.81		1,427	1.89		2,374	1.10
WY	209	0.18		840	1.11		1,049	0.49
Total	116,256	100.00		75,436	100.00		216,135	100.00

No information is available for American Samoa, Delaware, Florida, Hawaii, Illinois, Maryland, New Mexico, Vermont or Virgin Islands.

Table 3. LPN/VNs: New in State Functions, by Jurisdiction

JD	Examination			Endorsement			Total New in State	

The table content is entirely obscured by redaction bars. A thick black horizontal bar is located at the top of the table area, and the rest of the table is filled with numerous grey horizontal bars of varying lengths, completely covering any text or data that might have been present.

Table 5. Number of Graduates of Foreign Nursing Programs Licenses, by Jurisdiction

JD	RN Graduates of Foreign Nursing Programs	LPN/VN Graduates of Foreign Nursing Programs
AL	16	2
AR	35	
CA-RN	4,967	
CT	126	8
GU	19	1
IA	1	
KS	15	1
KY	3	
LA-RN	39	
MA	46	
ME	5	
MN	461	13
MO	47	
MP	216	2
NC	222	13
ND	4	
NE	13	5
NH	6	
NJ	32	1
OK	15	
OR	84	5
PA	284	12
RI	5	2
SD	3	
TX	1,460	62
WV-PN		10
Total	8,124	137

Information provided by 26 jurisdictions

Table 6. Summary of Licensing Activities

New In State	
Registered Nurses	216,135
Licensed Practical/Vocational Nurses	59,202
Total	275,337
Active Licenses ¹	
Registered Nurses	3,780,178
Licensed Practical/Vocational Nurses	971,157
Total	4,751,335
Graduates of Foreign Nursing Program ²	
Registered Nurses	8,124
Licenses Practical/Vocational Nurses	137
Total	8,261

¹ Includes 241,073 total number of active licenses reported in 2008 for American Samoa, California-VN, Delaware, Hawaii, Maryland, New Mexico, Vermont and Virgin Islands.

² Information provided by 26 jurisdictions

Table 8. Total Number of Active Advanced Practice/Authority to Practice Licenses Within the Member Board Jurisdictions

Abbreviation	Category	Active Licenses	
		N	%
CNM	Certified Nurse Midwife	7,680	3.9
CRNA	Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist	39,752	20.1
CNS	Clinical Nurse Specialist	1,633	0.8
CNS-PSYCH	Clinical Nurse Specialist - Psychiatry and/or Mental Health (including all its subspecialties)	4,941	2.5
CNS-NON-PSYCH	Clinical Nurse Specialist - Non-Psychiatry	9,486	4.8
Nurse Practitioners			
AC	Acute Care	2,663	1.3
AHP	Adult Health	11,945	6.1
CHP	Child Health/Pediatric	6,739	3.4
COL	College Health	14	0.0
EMR	Emergency	188	0.1
FAM	Family	31,195	15.8
FPN	Family Planning	42	0.0
GER	Geriatric	1,857	0.9
NEO	Neonatal	2,310	1.2
WOM	Obstetrical and/or Gynecological and/or Women's Health	5,416	2.7
PSY	Psychiatric and/or Mental Health	3,369	1.7
SCH	School Health	71	0.0
NP	Nurse Practitioner - no specialty	48,268	24.5
NP	Nurse Practitioner - no category designation	15,900	8.1
Other	Other Types of Nurse Practitioners	3,871	2.0
Total		197,340	100.0

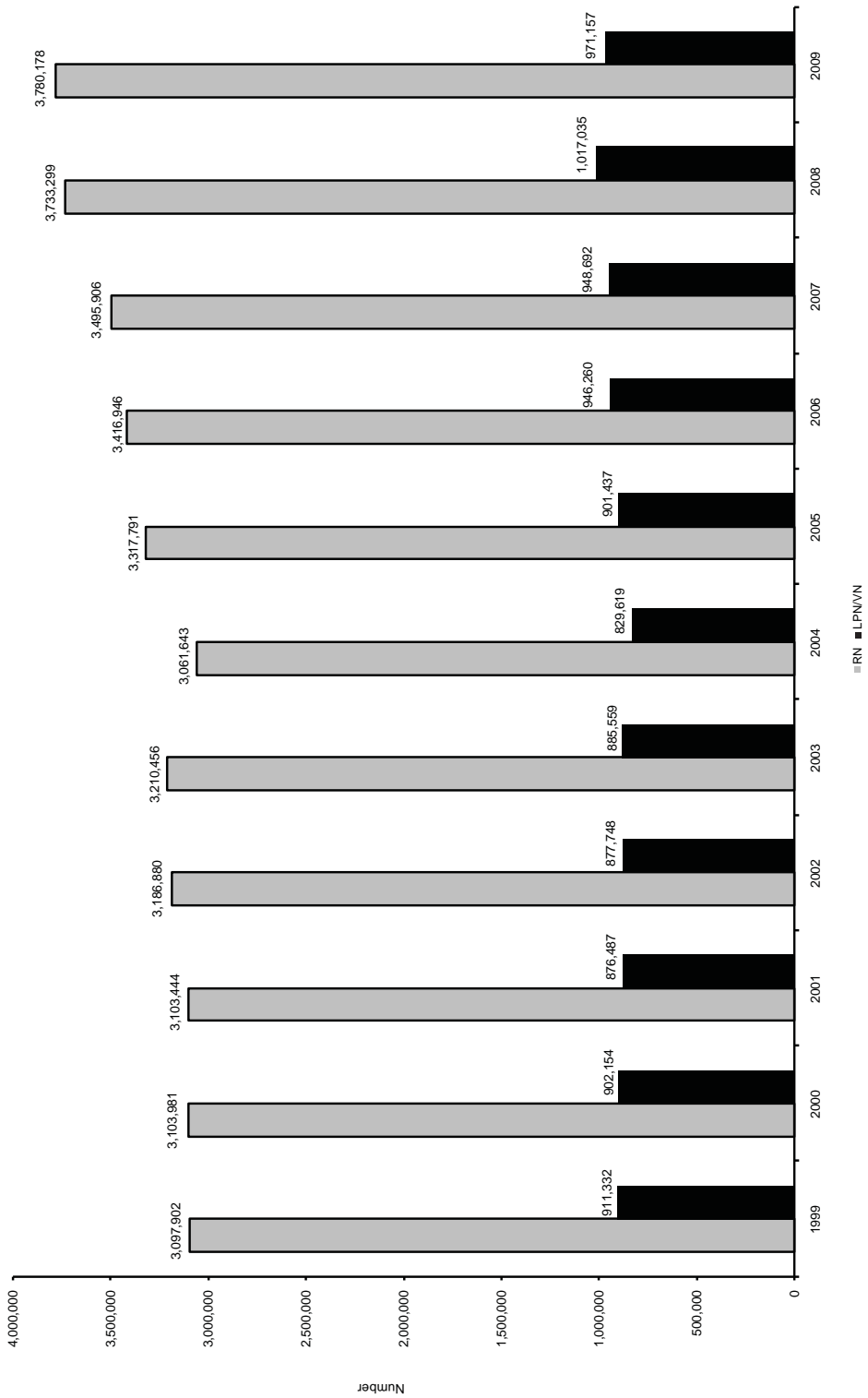


Figure 1. Total Number of Active Licenses: RNs and LPN/VNs - 1999-2009

Introduction

In 1982, NCSBN revised the State Board Test Pool Examination (SBTPE) substantially. NCSBN changed the examination from a norm-referenced test to a criterion-referenced test, implemented a new test plan and used Rasch's (1960) one parameter logistic model to calibrate items and measure candidates' abilities. At that time, NCSBN renamed the examinations the National Council Licensure Examination for Registered Nurses (NCLEX-RN®) and the National Council Licensure Examination for Practical Nurses (NCLEX-PN®). However, these NCLEX® examinations were very different than the NCLEX examinations taken by candidates today. These examinations were only administered twice a year in a pencil-and-paper format; each administration lasted two days.

In 1986, the NCSBN Board of Directors (BOD) funded an initial investigation on the feasibility of using computerized adaptive testing (CAT) procedures. CAT held the promise of making examinations available year round, shortening examination length by only giving candidates items that were appropriate for their ability and providing greater security for the content of the items. On April 1, 1994, NCSBN began administering the NCLEX-RN and NCLEX-PN examinations exclusively via CAT. This section provides a detailed breakdown of

and educators regarding the competence of the current cohort of entry-level nurses.

4. Information detailing the educational readiness of high school graduates who expressed an interest in nursing.

In April 1998, the passing standard for the NCLEX-RN Examination increased from -0.42 logits to -0.35 logits. In April 2001, this standard was retained for another three years. In April 2004, the standard increased to -0.28 logits. In April 2007, the standard increased again to -0.21 logits. The passing standard for the NCLEX-PN Examination has experienced a similar increase over time. In April 1999, the passing standard for the NCLEX-PN Examination increased from -0.51 logits to -0.47 logits. In April 2002, this standard was retained for another three years. In April 2005, the NCLEX-PN passing standard increased from -0.47 to -0.42 logits. In April 2008, the standard increased to -0.37 logits. It is important to note that the RN and PN standards are not directly comparable because they are based on different item pools and different scopes of practice.

Pass-Fail Decisions

Candidate performance on the NCLEX examinations is reported only as a pass-fail decision. Scores are never reported. As a result, almost all the statistics presented here are pass rates or statistics based upon a pass-fail decision.

To make pass-fail decisions, the computer seeks to determine with 95% certainty whether the candidate's true ability is above or below the passing standard. To do this, three pieces of information must be known: the current person ability estimate, the precision of that estimate and the passing standard. After the minimum number of items has been answered, the computer compares the candidate's ability level to the standard required for passing. Candidates clearly above the passing standard pass. Candidates clearly below the passing standard fail.

If the candidate's ability level is close enough to the passing standard that it is not clear which side of the passing standard his or her ability falls, the computer continues asking items. As more items are answered, the candidate's ability estimate becomes

more precise. After each item, the candidate's ability level is recomputed, using all of the information (answers to all the items asked) available at that point. When it becomes clear on which side of the passing standard the candidate's ability falls, the examination ends.

Some candidates' abilities are very close to the passing standard. For these candidates, all items in the item pool might not provide enough information to be certain their ability is truly above or below the passing standard. These are the candidates who take the maximum number of items. Once the maximum number of items has been administered, the computer waives the 95% certainty requirement and makes a pass or fail decision based upon the candidate's final ability estimate. If the candidate's ability estimate is above the passing standard, the candidate passes. If not, he or she fails.

If an NCLEX examination ends because time runs out, then the computer does not have enough information to make a clear pass-fail decision; if it did, it already would have stopped administering items. However, when the response patterns of people who ran out of time were investigated, it was found that some had been performing consistently above the passing standard, and their ability level appeared to be above passing, although close to it. A mechanism is therefore provided for these candidates to pass. The key word here is "consistently." If a candidate's ability estimate has been consistently above the passing standard over the last 60 items, then he or she will pass, despite having run out of time.

Table 1. Candidates Taking the NCLEX-RN® Examination, by Type of Candidate (Jan. 1 - Dec. 31, 2009)¹

Type of Candidate	Jan. 1 - March 31, 2009			April 1 - June 30, 2009			July 1 - Sep. 30, 2009			Oct. 1 - Dec. 31, 2009			Total: Jan. 1 - Dec. 31, 2009		
	Candidates	Passed	%	Candidates	Passed	%	Candidates	Passed	%	Candidates	Passed	%	Candidates	Passed	%
First-Time, U.S.-Educated															
Diploma	933	850	91.1	721	664	92.1	1,583	1,440	91.0	441	384	87.1	3,678	3,338	90.8
Associate Degree	18,220	15,912	87.3	21,131	18,955	89.7	32,322	28,365	87.8	6,993	5,693	81.4	78,666	68,925	87.6
Baccalaureate Degree	11,883	10,574	89.0	13,579	12,553	92.4	22,500	19,944	88.6	4,298	3,696	86.0	52,260	46,767	89.5
Special Program Codes	26	22	84.6	37	31	83.8	35	28	80.0	25	20	80.0	123	101	82.1
Total First-Time, U.S.-Educated	31,062	27,358	88.1	35,468	32,203	90.8	56,440	49,777	88.2	11,757	9,793	83.3	134,727	119,131	88.4
Repeat, U.S.-Educated	5,441	2,740	50.4	6,388	3,492	54.7	7,538	4,421	58.7	7,295	4,243	58.2	26,662	14,896	55.9
First-Time, Internationally Educated	5,775	2,429	42.1	5,576	2,381	42.7	5,061	2,077	41.0	5,027	2,181	43.4	21,439	9,068	42.3
Repeat, Internationally Educated	4,614	1,163	25.2	5,133	1,266	24.7	4,752	1,171	24.6	4,704	1,140	24.2	19,203	4,740	24.7
All Candidates	46,892	33,690	71.9	52,565	39,342	74.8	73,791	57,446	77.9	28,783	17,357	60.3	202,031	147,835	73.2

¹ Performance of RN Educational Programs. The following is a summary of the 2009 NCLEX pass rates for U.S. RN education programs based upon "rst-time candidate performance:

In 2009, 1,821 U.S. RN programs had at least one "rst-time candidate. The mean pass rate for those programs was 87.8% (SD 10.8%) when including only those programs with at least 10 "rst-time examinees (N=1,733) the mean pass rate was 88.0% (SD 9.2%).

Table 2. Summary Statistics for First-Time, U.S.-Educated Candidates

NCLEX-RN®	January-December 2009
Passing Standard	-0.21 logits
Estimated Decision Consistency ²	0.91
Average Test Length ³	115 items
Percent of Candidates Taking the Minimum Number of Items	55.4%
Percent of Candidates Taking the Maximum Number of Items	12.5%



Table 3. First-Time, U.S.-Educated Candidates Taking the NCLEX-RN® Examination, by Degree Type (Jan. 1 - March 31, 2009)¹

Jurisdiction	RN-Diploma			RN-Associate Degree			RN-Baccalaureate			Total Jan. 1 - Mar. 31, 2009			
	Candidates	Passed	%	Candidates	Passed	%	Candidates	Passed	%	Candidates	Passed	%	
Pennsylvania		158	141	89.2	385	327	84.9	385	324	84.2	928	792	85.3
Rhode Island	0			77	74	96.1	77	75	97.4	154	149	96.8	
South Carolina	0			327	298	91.1	264	223	84.5	591	521	88.2	
South Dakota	0			42	40	95.2	99	90	90.9	141	130	92.2	
Tennessee													
Texas		118	104	88.1	1,211	1,072	88.5	978	894	91.4	2,307	2,070	89.7
Utah		0			293	243	82.9	89	81	91.0	382	324	84.8
Vermont		0			0			0			0		
Virgin Islands		0			0			0			0		
Virginia		75	66	88.0	230	199	86.5	337	297	88.1	642	562	87.5
Washington		0			266	230	86.5	164	145	88.4	430	375	87.2
West Virginia S RN		0			42	36	85.7	98	79	800	140	115	82.1
Wisconsin		0			540	481	89.1	362	306	84.5	902	787	87.3
Wyoming		0			30	28	93.3	1	0	0.0	31	28	90.3
Total		933	850	91.1	18,220	15,912	87.3	11,883	10,574	89.0	31,036	27,336	88.1

¹ Data does not include Special Program Codes.

Alabama	0			749	679	90.7	424	400	94.3	1,173	1,079	92.0
American Samoa	0			0			0			0		
Arkansas	12	11	91.7	112	104	92.9	136	125	91.9	260	240	92.3
Colorado	0			220	196	89.1	229	219	95.6	449	415	92.4
Delaware	15	15	100.0	58	49	84.5	51	41	80.4	124	105	84.7
Florida	0			1,172	1,041	88.8	568	529	93.1	1,740	1,570	90.2
Guam	0			4	1	25.0	1	0	0.0	5	1	20.0
Idaho	0			139	130	93.5	43	42	97.7	182	172	94.5
Indiana	7	3	42.9	758	646	85.2	616	570	92.5	1,381	1,219	88.3
Kansas	0			566	486	85.9	489	450	92.0	1,055	936	88.8
Louisiana Š RN	0			110	96	87.3	73	64	87.7	183	160	87.4
Maryland	0			351	324	92.3	180	171	95.0	531	495	93.2
Michigan	0			530	481	90.8	236	213	90.3	766	694	90.6
Mississippi	0			629	569	90.5	218	203	93.1	847	772	91.1
Montana	0			76	66	86.8	70	67	95.7	146	133	91.1
Nevada	0			121	97	80.2	144	127	88.2	265	224	84.5
New Jersey	135	124	91.9	218	201	92.2	171	160	93.6	524	485	92.5
New York	0			1,147	973	84.8	457	389	85.1	1,604	1,362	84.9
North Dakota	0			53	48	90.6	219	195	89.0	272	243	89.3
Ohio	61	53	86.9	700	611	87.3	460	424	92.2	1,221	1,088	89.1
Oregon	0			34	32	94.1	190	181	95.3	224	213	95.1

The image shows a large table structure. At the top, there is a solid black horizontal bar. Below this bar is a white rectangular area. This area is divided into two columns by a vertical line. The top row of this area is white. The following rows alternate between a white row and a light gray shaded row, with a total of 10 rows in this section. At the bottom of the table is another solid black horizontal bar.

Table 6. First-Time, U.S.-Educated Candidates Taking the NCLEX-RN® Examination, by Degree Type (Oct. 1 - Dec. 31, 2009)¹

Jurisdiction	RN-Diploma			RN-Associate Degree			RN-Baccalaureate			Total Oct. 1 - Dec. 31, 2009		
	Candidates	Passed	%	Candidates	Passed	%	Candidates	Passed	%	Candidates	Passed	%
Pennsylvania	233	205	88.0	255	189	74.1	326	280	85.9	814	674	82.8
Rhode Island	0			4	3	75.0	9	6	66.7	13	9	69.2
South Carolina	0			129	109	84.5	48	44	91.7	177	153	86.4
South Dakota	0			8	4	50.0	31	29	93.6	39	33	84.6
Tennessee	0			23	22	95.7	112	105	93.8	135	127	94.1
Texas	3	3	100.0	323	278	86.1	138	114	82.6	464	395	85.1
Utah	0			148	120	81.1	18	14	77.8	166	134	80.7
Vermont	0			6	3	50.0	9	6	66.7	15	9	60.0
Virgin Islands	0			0			8	5	62.5	8	5	62.5
Virginia	92	82	89.1	171	135	79.0	85	67	78.8	348	284	81.6
Washington	0			158	129	81.7	53	48	90.6	211	177	83.9
West Virginia Š RN	0			19	11	57.9	53	38	71.7	72	49	68.1
Wisconsin	0			40	27	67.5	88	80	90.9	128	107	83.6
Wyoming	0			6	3	50.0	10	10	100.0	16	13	81.3
Total	441	384	87.1	6,993	5,693	81.4	4,298	3,696	86.0	11,732	9,773	83.3

¹ Data does not include Special Program Codes.

Table 8. First-Time, Internationally Educated Candidates Taking the NCLEX-RN® Examination, by Country of Education (Jan. 1 - Dec. 31, 2009)

Country of Education	Jan. 1 - Mar. 31, 2009			Apr. 1 - June 30, 2009			July 1 - Sept. 30, 2009			Oct. 1 - Dec. 31, 2009			Total Jan. 1 - Dec. 31, 2009		
	Candidates	Passed	%	Candidates	Passed	%	Candidates	Passed	%	Candidates	Passed	%	Candidates	Passed	%
Ireland	6	5	83.3	1	1	100.0	2	0	0.0	4	3	75.0	13	9	69.2
Israel	13	8	61.5	22	14	63.6	14	8	57.1	21	13	61.9	70	43	61.4
Italy	3	2	66.7	5	2	40.0	1	0	0.0	0	0		9	4	44.4
Ivory Coast (Cote D'Ivoire)	0	0		1	0	0.0	0	0	0.0	0	0		1	0	0.0
Jamaica	4	3	75.0	11	4	36.4	9	4	44.4	15	4	26.7	39	15	38.5
Japan	25	11	44.0	17	6	35.3	28	11	39.3	25	13	52.0	95	41	43.2
Jordan	5	2	40.0	4	0	0.0	14	6	42.9	6	3	50.0	29	11	37.9
Kazakhstan	2	0	0.0	0	0		2	1	50.0	1	0	0.0	5	1	20.0
Kenya	16	7	43.8	18	5	27.8	14	4	28.6	16	8	50.0	64	24	37.5
Korea, North	1	1	100.0	2	2	100.0	1	1	100.0	1	1	100.0	5	5	100.0
Korea, South	336	219	65.2	277	164	59.2	292	178	61.0	288	162	56.3	1,193	723	60.6
Kuwait	0	0		0	0		1	0	0.0	0	0		1	0	0.0
Ky30.0															

Figure 1. NCLEX-RN® Pass Rates for First-Time, U.S.-Educated Candidates

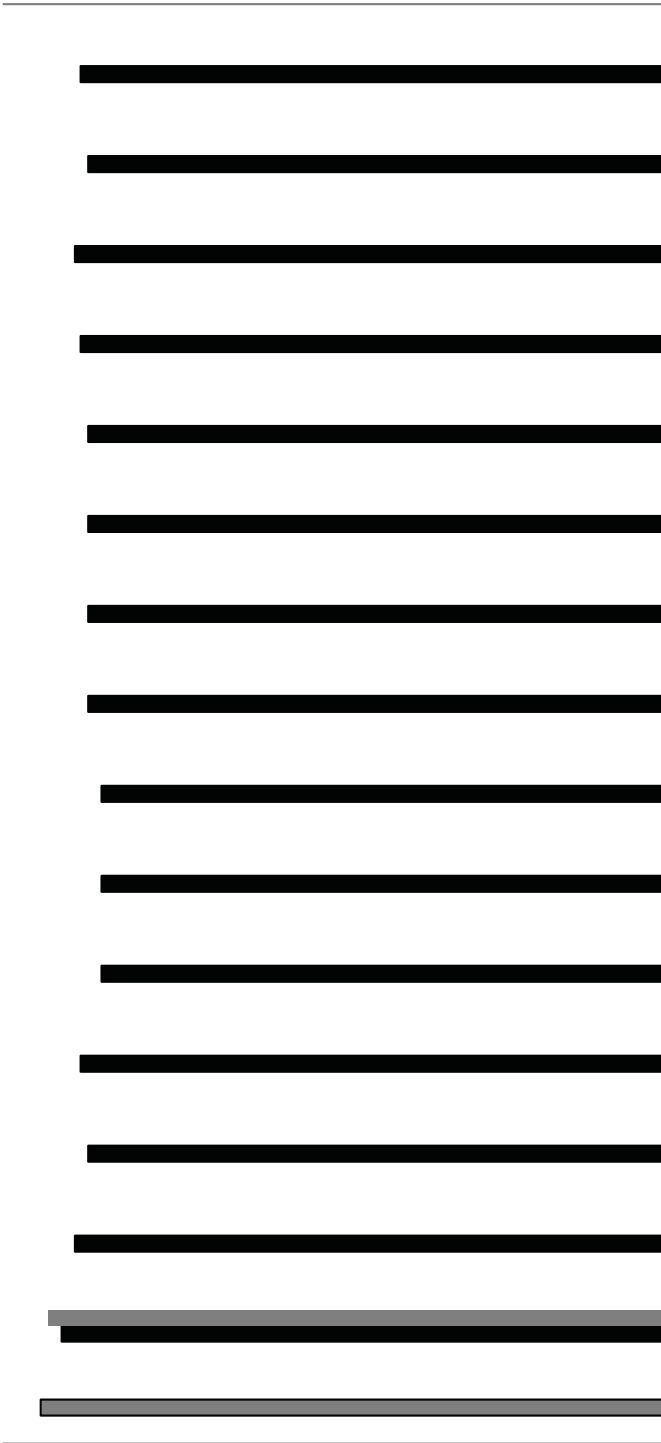
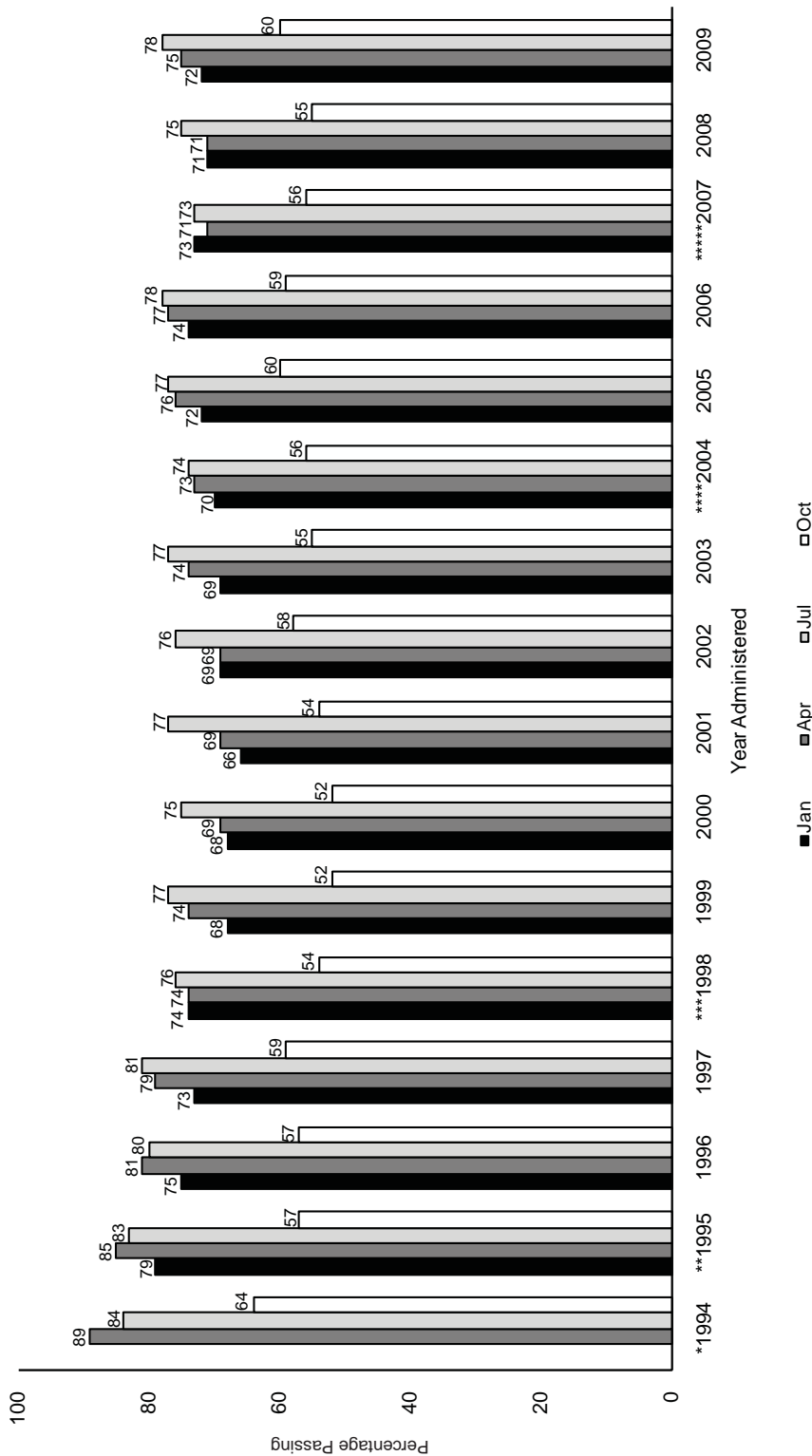
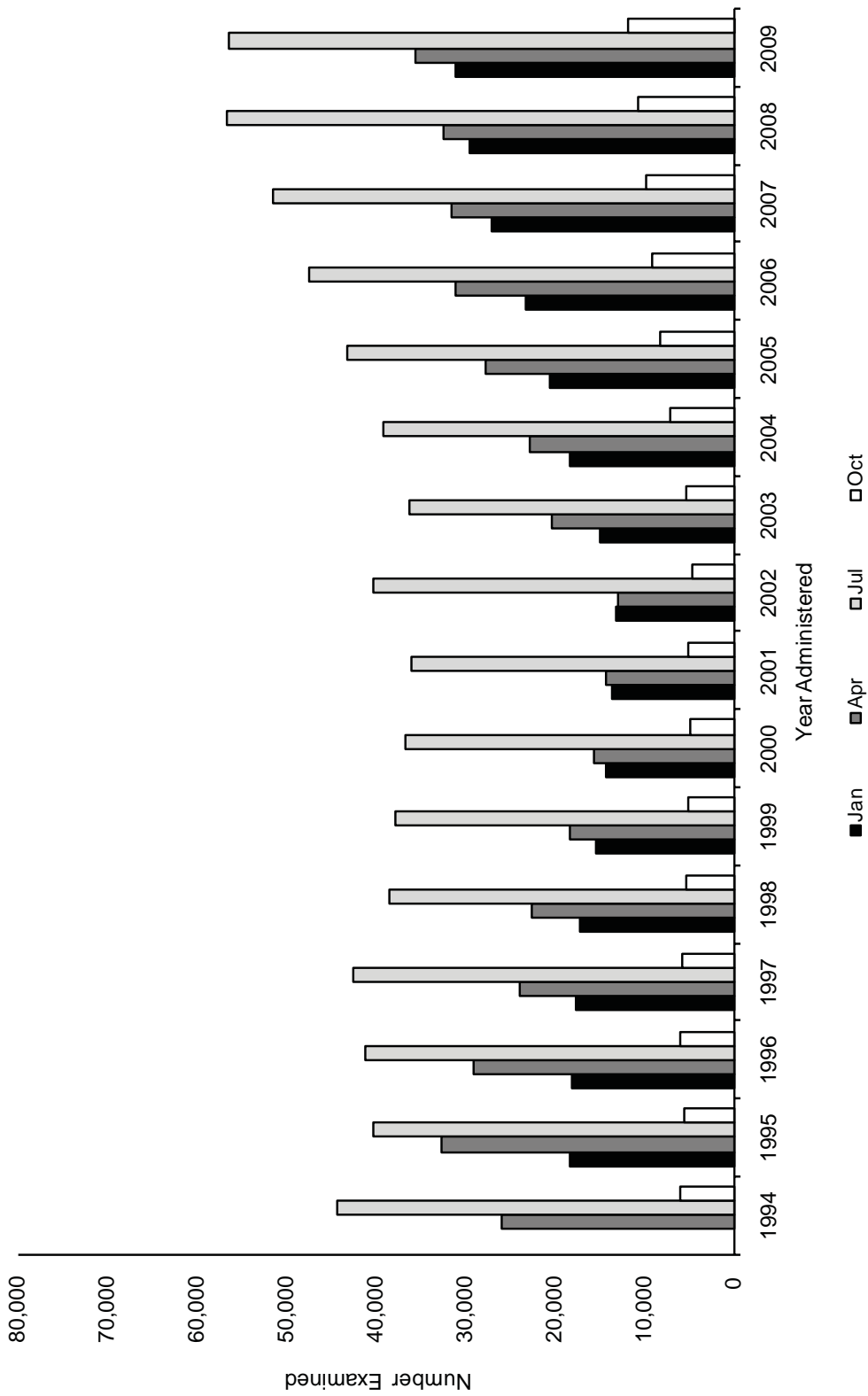


Figure 2. NCLEX-RN® Pass Rates for All Candidates



*APR 1994: Computer adaptive testing (CAT) begins. Passing standard is -0.4766 logits.
 **OCT 1995: Passing standard changed from -0.4766 to -0.42 logits.
 ***APR 1998: Passing standard changed from -0.42 to -0.35 logits.
 ****APR 2004: Passing standard changed from -0.35 to -0.28 logits.
 *****APR 2007: Passing standard changed from -0.28 to -0.21 logits.

Figure 4. NCLEX-RN® Volume for First-Time, U.S.-Educated Candidates



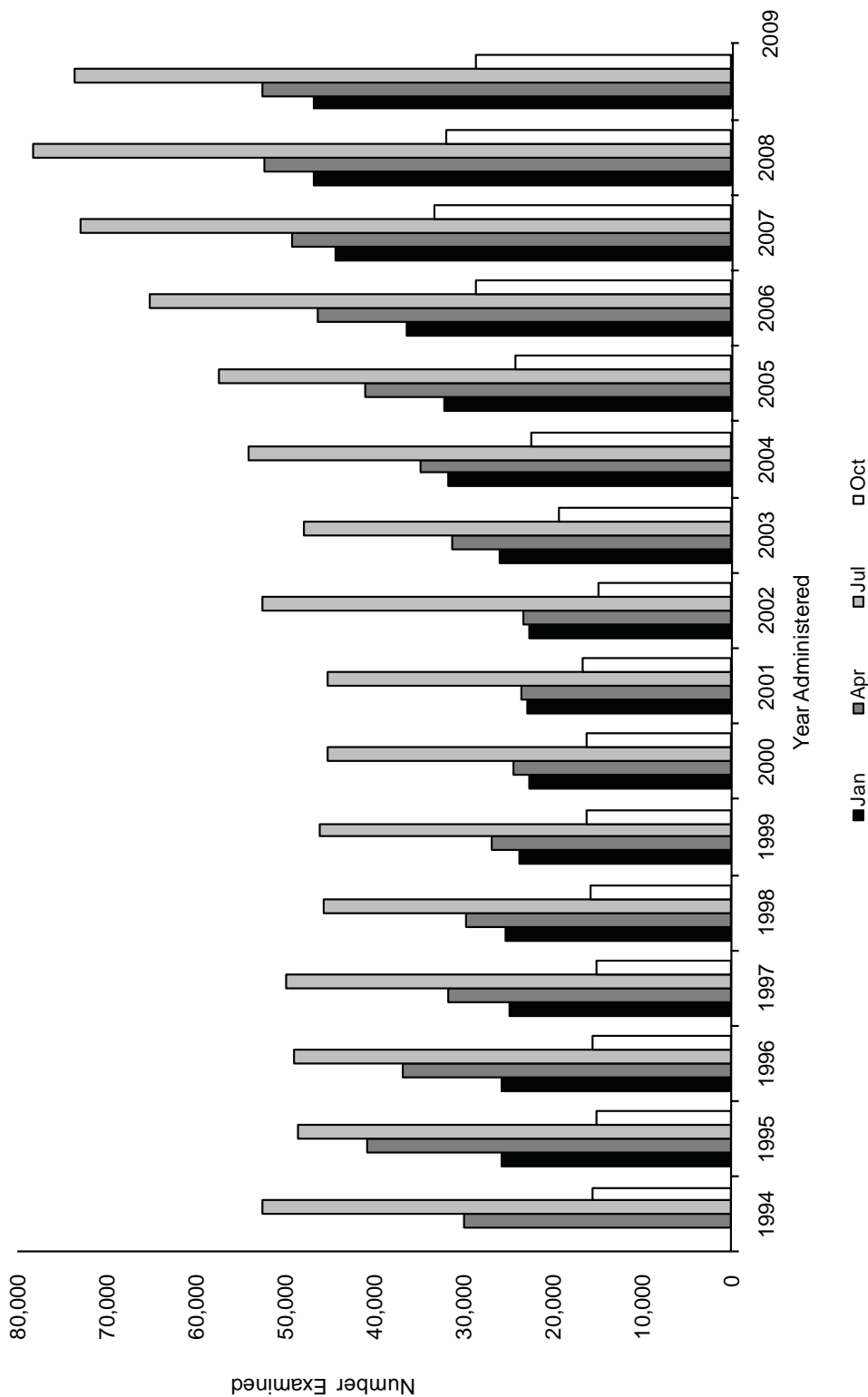


Figure 5. NCLEX-RN® Volume for All Candidates

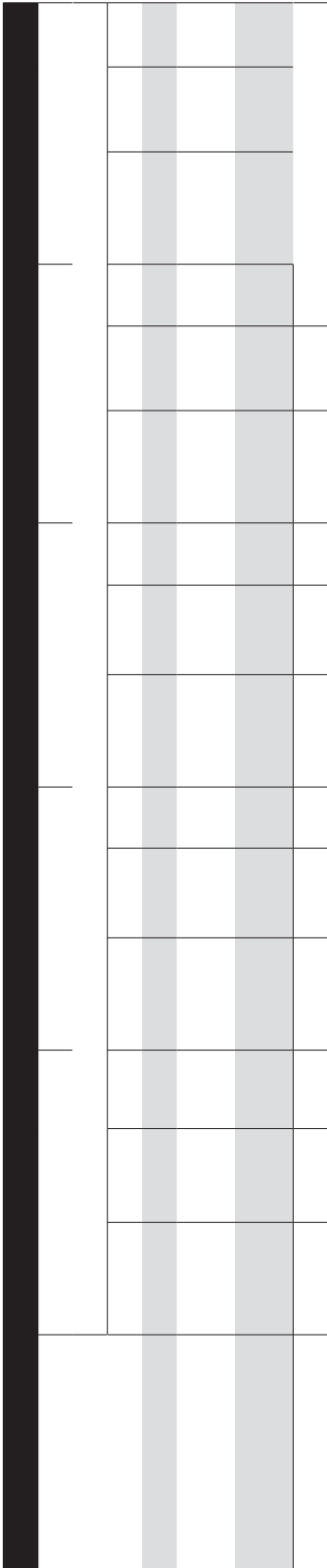
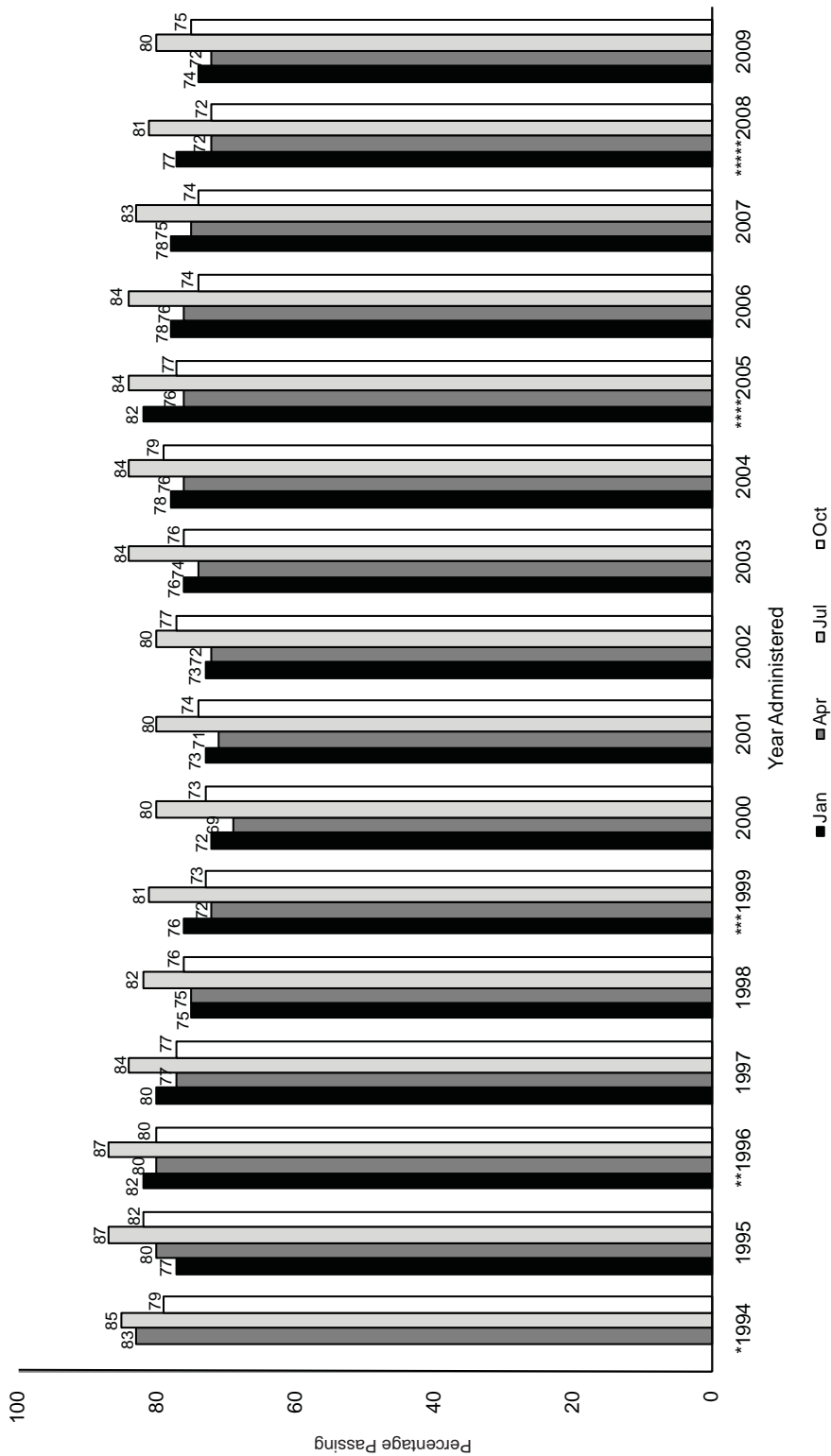




Table 12: First-Time, Internationally Educated Candidates Taking the NCLEX-PN® Examination, by Country of Education (Jan. 1 - Dec. 31, 2009)

Country of Education	Jan. 1 - March 31, 2009			April 1 - June 30, 2009			July 1 - Sep. 30, 2009			Oct. 1 - Dec. 31, 2009			Total Jan. 1 - Dec. 31, 2009		
	Candidates	Passed	%	Candidates	Passed	%	Candidates	Passed	%	Candidates	Passed	%	Candidates	Passed	%
Uganda	0			0			0			1	100.0	1	1	100.0	
Ukraine	1	0	0.0	4	2	50.0	0			2	0	0.0	7	2	28.6
United Kingdom	1	1	100.0	1	1	100.0	1	0	0.0	0			3	2	66.7
Uzbekistan	1	1	100.0	2	0	0.0	1	0	0.0	1	1	100.0	5	2	40.0
Viet Nam	0			0			1	0	0.0	0			1	0	0.0
Zambia	0			0			1	0	0.0	0			1	0	0.0
Total	305	134	43.9	328	135	41.2	252	129	51.2	245	112	45.7	1,130	510	45.1

Figure 8. NCLEX-PN® Pass Rates for All Candidates



*APR 1994: Computer adaptive testing (CAT) begins. Passing Standard is -0.56 logits.

**OCT 1996: Passing Standard changed from -0.56 to -0.51 logits.

***APR 1999: Passing Standard changed from -0.51 to -0.47 logits.

****APR 2005: Passing Standard changed from -0.47 to -0.42 logits

*****APR 2008: Passing Standard changed from -0.42 to -0.37 logits

Figure 9. NCLEX-PN® Annual Pass Rates, April 1994 - December 2009



Figure 10. NCLEX-PN® Volume for First-Time, U.S.-Educated Candidates



Figure 11. NCLEX-PN® Volume for All Candidates



Figure 12. NCLEX-PN® Annual Volume, April 1994 - December 2009

