



2019 NCLEX[®] Examination Statistics

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

Mission Statement

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Introduction

In 1982, NCSBN substantially revised the State Board Test Pool Examination (SBTPE). 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 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 Examination. Candidates were able to take the NCLEX-RN examination for purposes of licensure/registration in Canada. This publication provides a detailed breakdown of candidate performance for 2019, as well as historical data.

Computerized Adaptive Testing

CAT is a method of administering examinations that combines the power and speed of current computer technology with modern measurement theory. With CAT, each candidate's test is unique; it is assembled interactively as the individual is tested. As the candidate answers each question, the computer calculates an ability estimate based on all earlier answers. The test administration software then the software scans through available items with approximately a 50% chance of answering it correctly. This item is selected and presented to the candidate on the computer screen. This process is

repeated for each item, creating an examination tailored to all NCLEX test plan requirements. The examination continues in this way until a pass-fail decision can be determined. Because the examination could end at any time after the minimum number of items has been answered, it is important that the test plan

Setting the Passing Standard

To ensure a consistent standard of competence in nursing practice, NCSBN uses a criterion-referenced standard, which means that passing or failing depends solely upon a candidate's level of performance in relation to the established point that represents safe entry-level competence. There is no preassigned percentage of candidates that pass or fail each examination. Because the practice of nursing changes over time, it is necessary to reevaluate the appropriateness of the passing standard from time to time. To ensure that the passing standards for the NCLEX-RN and NCLEX-PN examinations are essential for entry-level nurse practice, NCSBN's BOD reevaluates the passing standard every three years or when the test plan changes. In evaluating the passing standard, the BOD considers information from a variety of sources. Although there is no limit on the information it may consider, the BOD is typically presented with the following information:

1. The results of a standard-setting exercise undertaken by the panel of judges. Currently, this procedure with additional statistical compromise

- 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. In April 2010, the standard increased to -0.16 logits. In April 2013, the standard increased to 0.00 logits. In April 2016, this standard was retained for another three years. In April 2019, this standard was again retained for another three years.

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. In April 2011, the standard increased to -0.27 logits. In April 2014, the standard increased to -0.21 logits. In April 2017, this standard was retained for another three years. 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

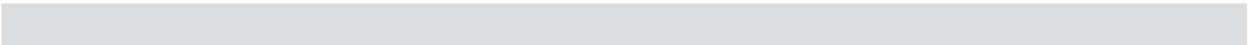
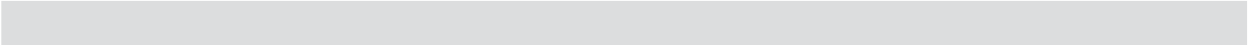
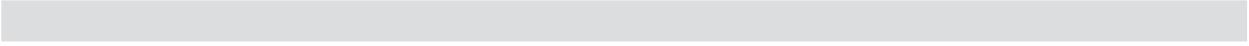
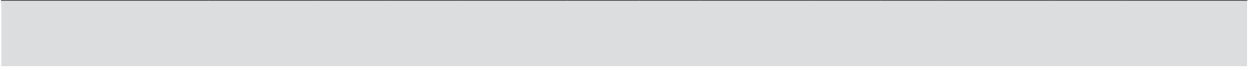
2019 NCLEX® EXAMINATION STATISTICS

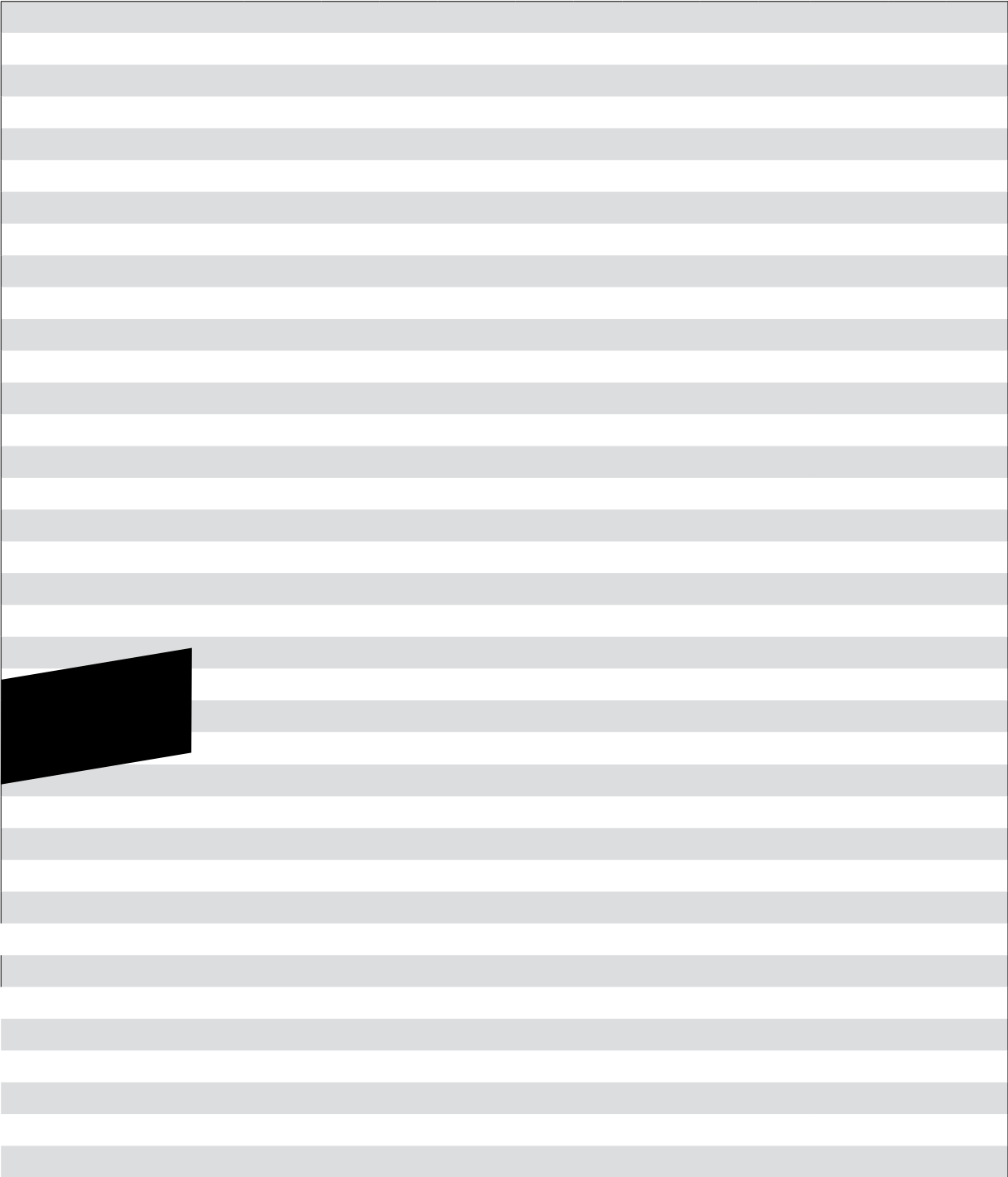
Table 1. Candidates Taking the NCLEX-RN® for U.S. Licensure by Type of Candidate

NCLEX-RN® Examination: Jan. 1 – Dec. 31, 2019															
Type of Candidate	Jan. 1 – March 31, 2019			April 1 – June 30, 2019			July 1 – Sept. 30, 2019			Oct. 1 – Dec. 31, 2019			Total Jan. 1 – Dec. 31, 2019		
	Candidates	Passed	%	Candidates	Passed	%	Candidates	Passed	%	Candidates	Passed	%	Candidates	Passed	%
First-Time, U.S.-Educated															
Diploma	545	485	89.0	607	535	88.1	769	688	89.5	326	266	81.6	2,247	1,974	87.9
Baccalaureate	22,550	20,930	92.8	26,345	24,282	92.2	27,589	25,005	90.6	7,798	6,685	85.7	84,282	76,902	91.2
Associate Degree	23,916	20,876	87.3	26,979	23,328	86.5	26,078	22,340	85.7	7,825	5,673	72.5	84,798	72,217	85.2
Special Program Codes	17	8	47.1	10	7	70.0	8	4	50.0	12	8	66.7	47	27	57.4
Total First-Time, U.S.-Educated	47,028	42,299	89.9	53,941	48,152	89.3	54,444	48,037	88.2	15,961	12,632	79.1	171,374	151,120	88.2
Repeat, U.S.-Educated	8,862	3,996	45.1	9,150	3,395	37.1	11,507	5,991	52.1	10,496	4,237	40.4	40,015	17,619	44.0
First-Time, Internationally Educated	4,814	2,292	47.6	5,064	2,353	46.5	5,173	2,499	48.3	5,989	2,425	40.5	21,040	9,569	45.5
Repeat, Internationally Educated	4,706	1,410	30.0	4,970	1,368	27.5	4,768	1,406	29.5	5,421	1,181	21.8	19,865	5,365	27.0
All Candidates	65,410	49,997	76.4	73,125	55,268	75.6	75,892	57,933	76.3	37,867	20,475	54.1	252,294	183,673	72.8

Table 4. First-Time, U.S.-Educated Candidates Taking the NCLEX-RN® for U.S. Licensure by Type of Degree (Jan. 1 – March 31, 2019)¹

Jurisdiction	RN-Diploma			RN-Associate Degree			RN-Baccalaureate			Total Jan. 1 - March 31, 2019		
	Candidates	Passed	%	Candidates	Passed	%	Candidates	Passed	%	Candidates	Passed	%
Oregon				29	24	82.8	107	100	93.5	136	124	91.2
Pennsylvania	134	124	92.5	615	575	93.5	715	668	93.4	1,464	1,367	93.4
Rhode Island				158	138	87.3	116	108	93.1	274	246	89.8
South Carolina				334	299	89.5	421	397	94.3	755	696	92.2
South Dakota				40	38	95.0	225	208	92.4	265	246	92.8
Tennessee				298	269	90.3	802	747	93.1	1,100	1,016	92.4
Texas	39	37	94.9	1,935	1,759	90.9	2,436	2,322	95.3	4,410	4,118	93.4
Utah				422	363	86.0	285	264	92.6	707	627	88.7
Vermont							1	1	100.0	1	1	100.0
Virginia				457	387	84.7	752	716	95.2	1,209	1,103	91.2
Washington				220	199	90.5	214	191	89.3	434	390	89.9
West Virginia				148	143	96.6	77	70	90.9	225	213	94.7
Wisconsin				696	651	93.5	528	462	87.5	1,224	1,113	90.9
Wyoming				59	50	84.7				59	50	84.7
Total	545	485	89.0	23,916	20,876	87.3	22,550	20,930	92.8	47,011	42,291	90.0





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Table 9. First-Time, Internationally Educated Candidates Taking the NCLEX-RN® for U.S. Licensure by Country of Education (Jan. 1 – Dec. 31, 2019)

Country of Education	Jan. 1 – March 31, 2019			April 1 – June 30, 2019			July 1 – Sept. 30, 2019			Oct. 1 – Dec. 31, 2019			Total Jan. 1 – Dec. 31, 2019		
	Candidates	Passed	%	Candidates	Passed	%	Candidates	Passed	%	Candidates	Passed	%	Candidates	Passed	%
Albania	3	1	33.3	4	1	25.0	3	1	33.3	4	0	0.0	14	3	21.4
Algeria							1	0	0.0				1	0	0.0
Antigua and Barbuda	2	1	50.0	3	0	0.0	3	0	0.0	4	1	25.0	12	2	16.7
Argentina							1	1	100.0	3	2	66.7	4	3	75.0
Armenia	2	1	50.0	4	2	50.0	4	2	50.0	2	2	100.0	12	7	58.3
Australia	11	6	54.5	14	12	85.7	16	7	43.8	23	15	65.2	64	40	62.5
Austria							1	0	0.0				1	0	0.0
Bahamas	2	2	100.0	9	6	66.7	4	2	50.0	3	1	33.3	18	11	61.1
Bangladesh							2	1	50.0				2	1	50.0
Barbados	3	2	66.7	5	2	40.0	8	3	37.5				16	7	43.8
Belarus				1	0	0.0	2	1	50.0	3	1	33.3	6	2	33.3
Belgium	1	1	100.0	1	1	100.0	1	1	100.0	1	1	100.0	4	4	100.0
Belize	3	0	0.0	3	0	0.0				1	1	100.0	7	1	14.3
Bermuda	2	1	50.0	1	0	0.0	2	1	50.0	1	0	0.0	6	2	33.3
Bhutan										1	1	100.0	1	1	100.0
Botswana				1	1	100.0							1	1	100.0
Brazil	14	11	78.6	12	8	66.7	11	7	63.6	19	9	47.4	56	35	62.5
Burkina Faso	1	0	0.0										1	0	0.0
Cameroon	13	3	23.1	18	4	22.2	23	6	26.1	33	3	9.1	87	16	18.4
Canada	43	35	81.4	62	52	83.9	42	30	71.4	54	49	90.7	201	166	82.6
Chile	1	1	100.0	3	3	100.0	2	0	0.0	5	4	80.0	11	8	72.7
China	50	21	42.0	44	19	43.2	40	15	37.5	44	17	38.6	178	72	40.4
Colombia	3	1	33.3	8	2	25.0	5	2	40.0	9	2	22.2	25	7	28.0
Costa Rica	1	0	0.0	2	0	0.0							3	0	0.0
Cuba	41	21	51.2	53	23	43.4	42	15	35.7	40	11	27.5	176	70	39.8

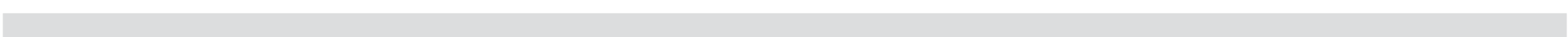
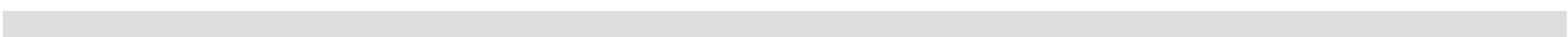
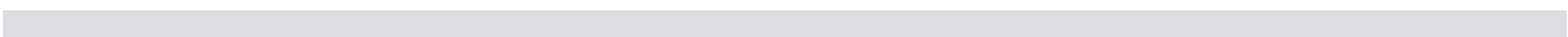
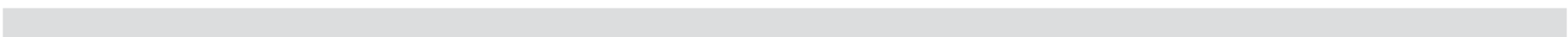
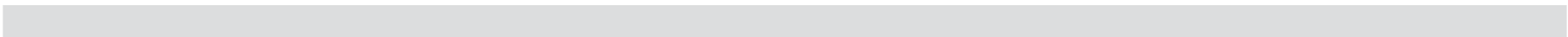
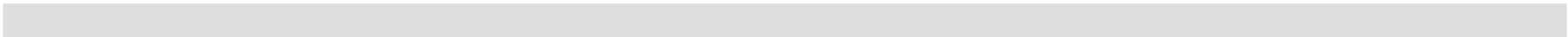
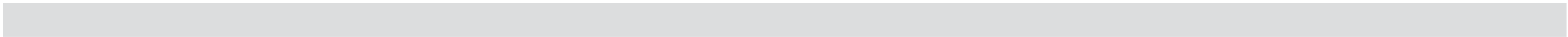




Table 10. First-Time, Canada-Educated Candidates Taking the NCLEX-RN® for Canadian Licensure/Registration by Type of Degree (Jan. 1 – Dec. 31, 2019)

Jurisdiction	RN-Baccalaureate			RN-Special Program Codes			Total Jan. 1 - Dec. 31, 2019		
	Candidates	Passed	%	Candidates	Passed	%	Candidates	Passed	%
Alberta	1,407	1,251	88.9				1,407	1,251	88.9
British Columbia	1,456	1,303	89.5	47	26	55.3	1,503	1,329	88.4
Manitoba	417	381	91.4				417	381	91.4
New Brunswick	207	164	79.2				207	164	79.2
Newfoundland And Labrador	234	219	93.6				234	219	93.6
Northwest Territories And Nunavut	16	10	62.5				16	10	62.5
Nova Scotia	601	474	78.9				601	474	78.9
Ontario	4,747	3,989	84.0	2	1	50.0	4,749	3,990	84.0
Prince Edward Island	74	61	82.4				74	61	82.4
Saskatchewan	585	503	86.0	16	14	87.5	601	517	86.0
Total*	9,744	8,355	85.7	65	41	63.1	9,809	8,396	85.6

* 33 Candidates are not included because their educational jurisdictions are not one of the 10 regulatory bodies that decided to adopt the NCLEX-RN as the nursing licensure/registration exam for Canada

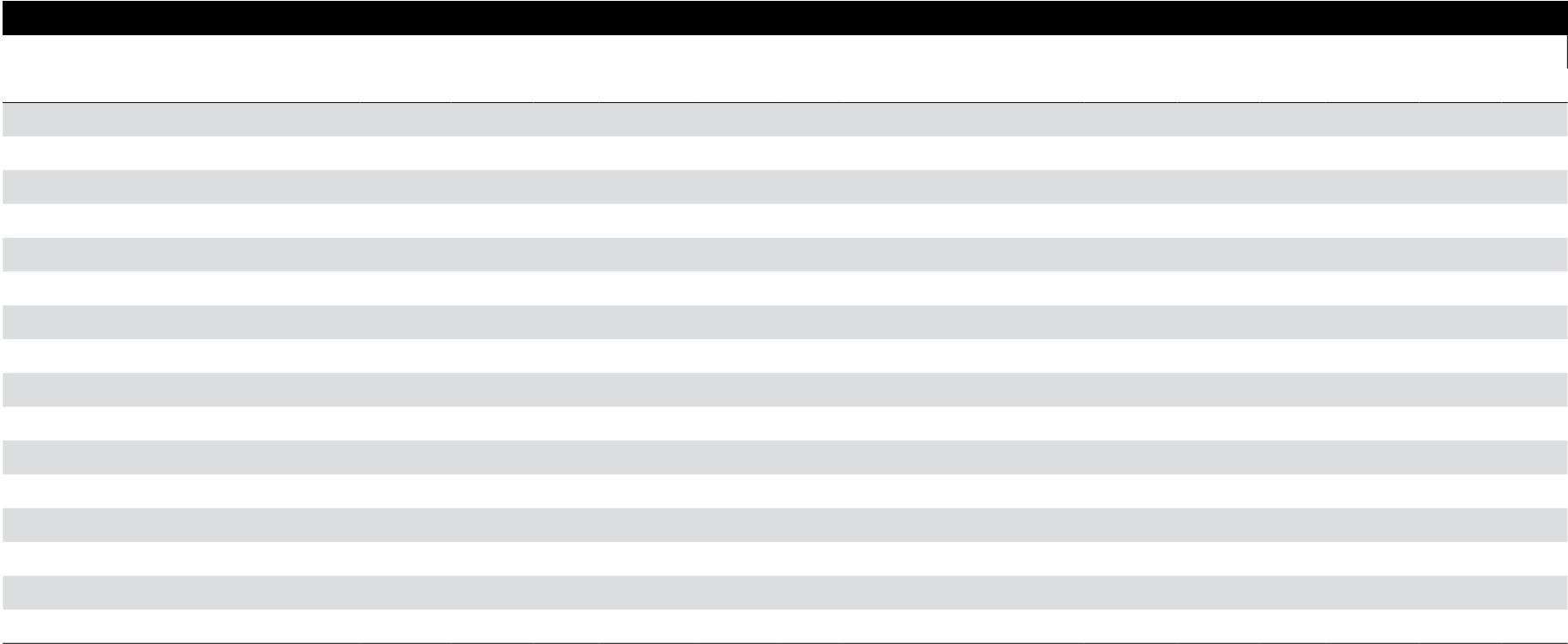


Figure 1. NCLEX-RN® Pass Rates for First-Time, U.S.-Educated Candidates for U.S. Licensure



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



Figure 3. NCLEX-RN® Yearly Pass Rates for U.S. Licensure



Figure 4. NCLEX-RN® Pass Rates for First-Time, Canada-Educated Candidates for Canadian Licensure/Registration

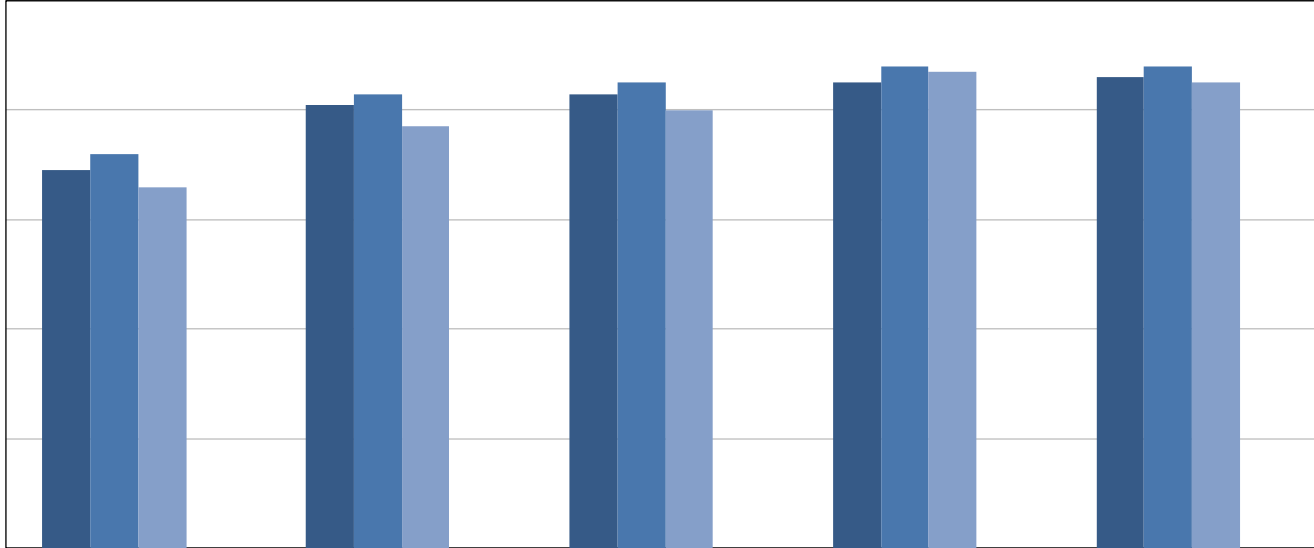


Figure 5. NCLEX-RN® Pass Rates for All Candidates for Canadian Licensure/Registration

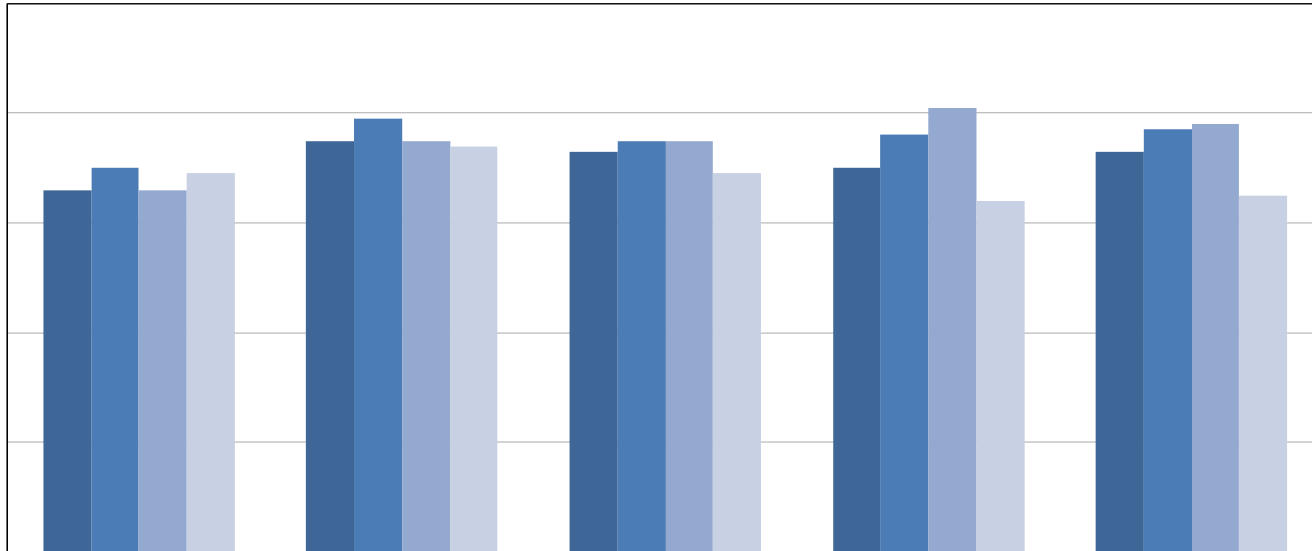


Figure 6. NCLEX-RN® Yearly Pass Rates for Canadian Licensure/Registration

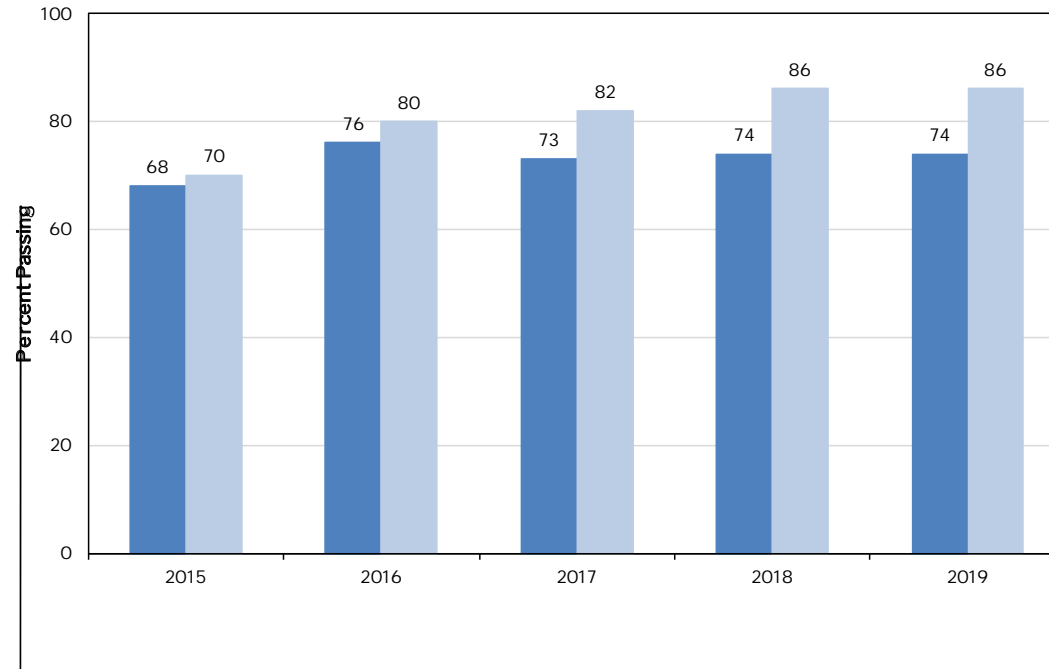


Figure 7. NCLEX-RN® Volume for First-Time, U.S.-Educated Candidates for U.S. Licensure V9539 2034156 40 SCN45.31 3.2 5e8733.14.4.15143592.48133925 2299 75643.14.4.1540363.101 7325933041393

Figure 8. NCLEX-RN® Volume for All Candidates for U.S. Licensure

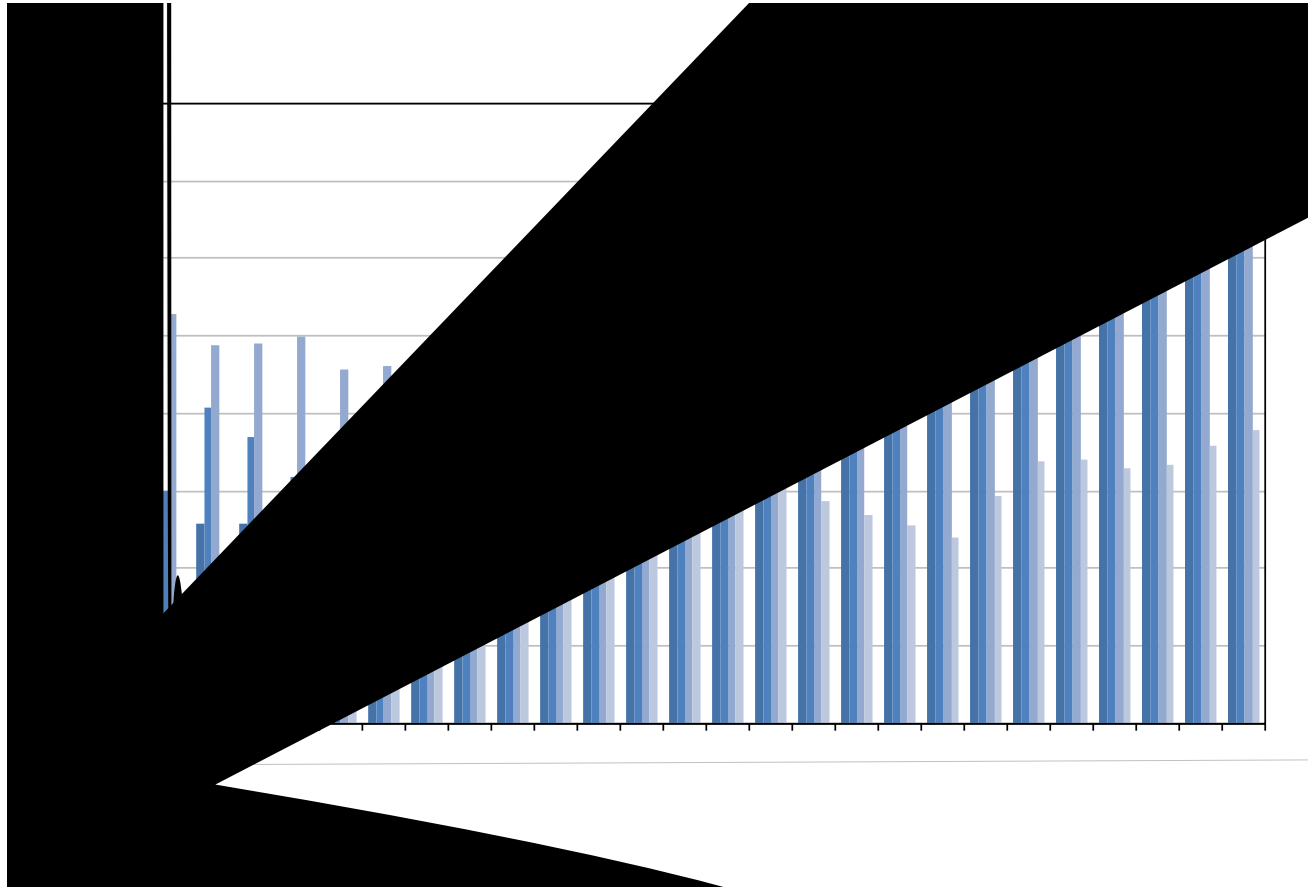


Figure 10. NCLEX-RN® Volume for First-Time, Canada-Educated Candidates for Canadian Licensure/Registration

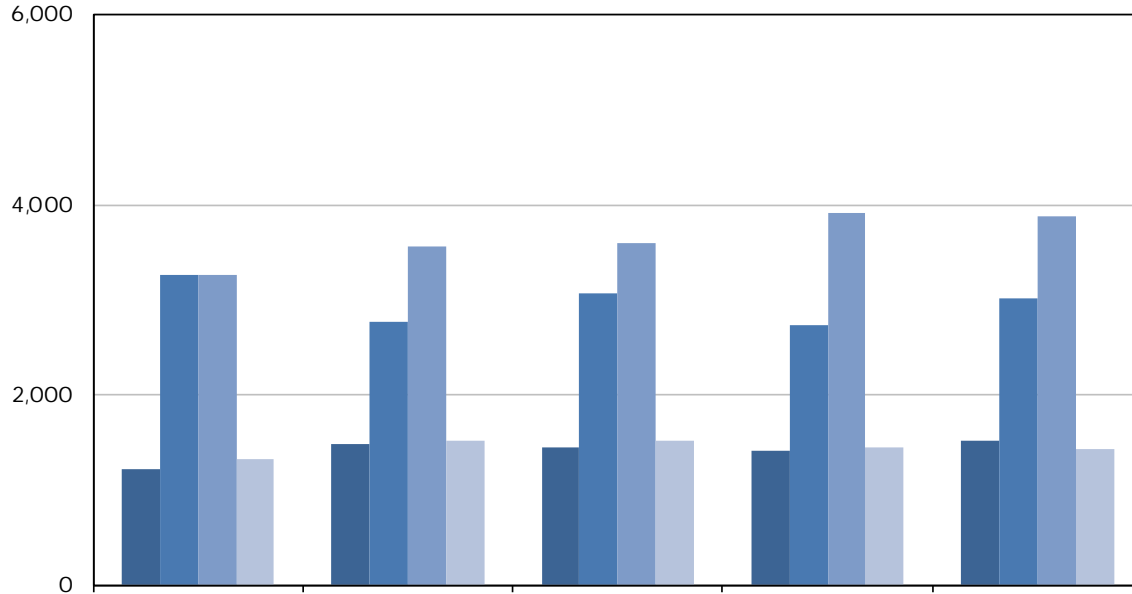


Figure 11. NCLEX-RN® Volume for All Candidates for Canadian Licensure/Registration

Figure 12. NCLEX-RN® Annual Volume for Canadian Licensure/Registration, January 2015 – December 2019

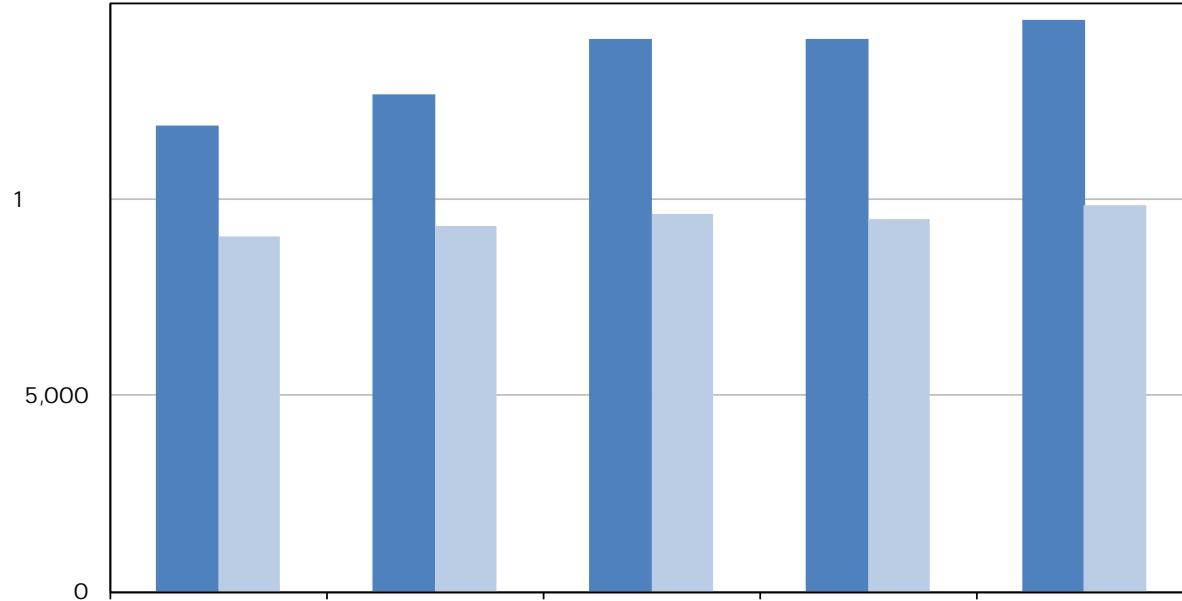




Table 14. First-Time, U.S.-Educated Candidates Taking the NCLEX-PN® (Jan. 1 – Dec. 31, 2019)

Jurisdiction	Jan. 1 – March 31, 2019			April 1 – June 30, 2019			July 1 – Sept. 30, 2019			Oct. 1 – Dec. 31, 2019			Total Jan. 1 – Dec. 31, 2019		
	Candidates	Passed	%	Candidates	Passed	%	Candidates	Passed	%	Candidates	Passed	%	Candidates	Passed	%
Washington	73	66	90.4	91	87	95.6	166	158	95.2	65	55	84.6	395	366	92.7
West Virginia	57	49	86.0	34	29	85.3	332	277	83.4	90	74	82.2	513	429	83.6
Wisconsin	274	260	94.9	362	350	96.7	254	243	95.7	104	97	93.3	994	950	95.6
Wyoming	50	44	88.0	49	48	98.0	55	54	98.2	10	10	100.0	164	156	95.1
Total	11,093	9,398	84.7	10,186	8,834	86.7	17,048	14,800	86.8	9,901	8,267	83.5	48,228	41,299	85.6

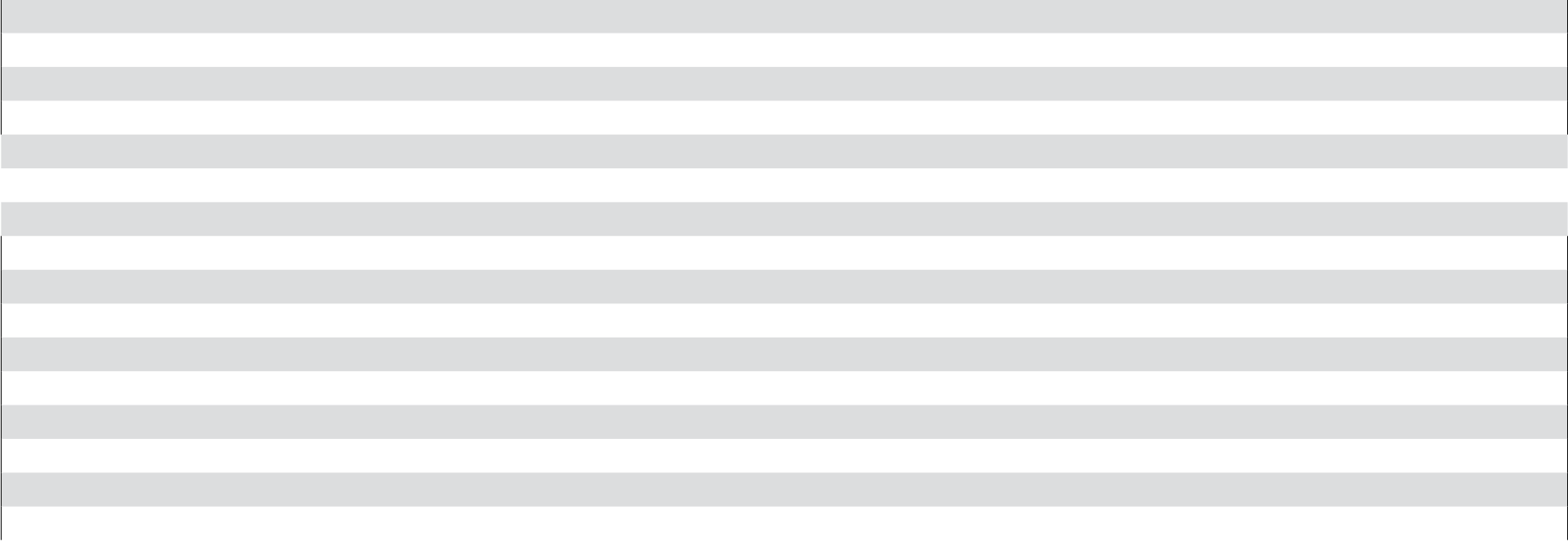
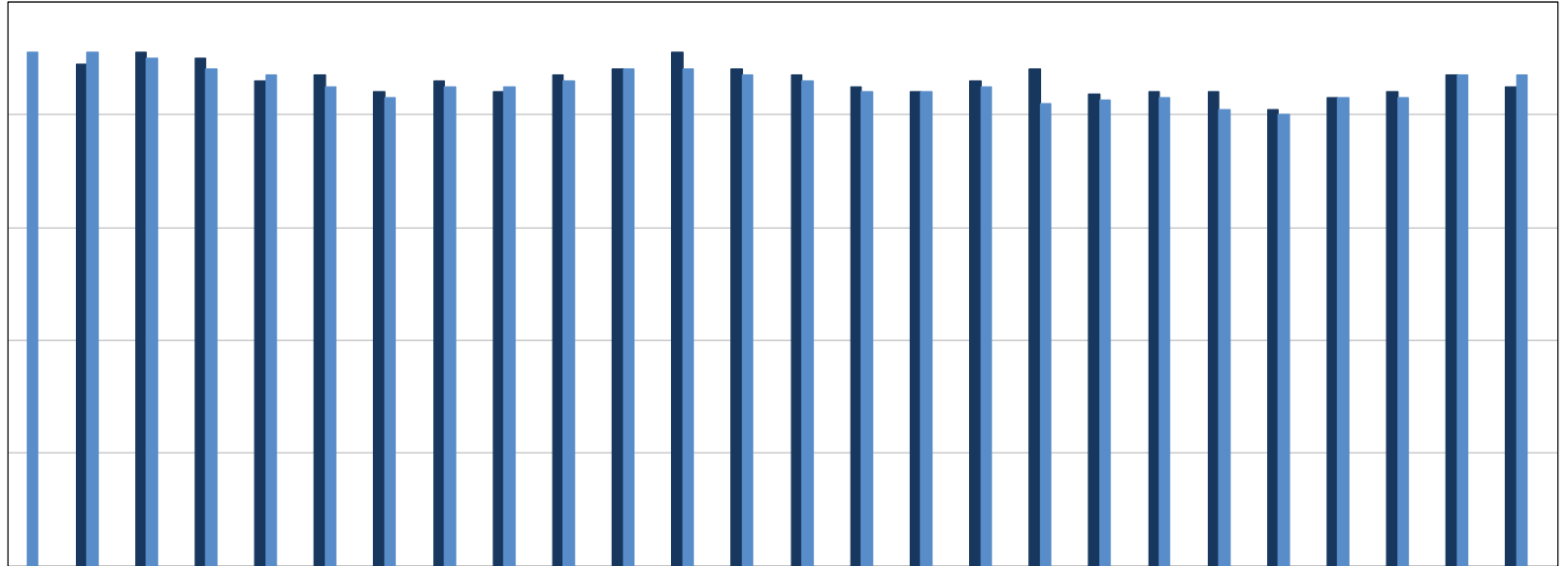


Figure 13. NCLEX-PN® Pass Rates for First-Time, U.S.-Educated Candidates



*April 1994 Computer Adaptive Test (CAT) begins. Passing Standard -0.56 logits.

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

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

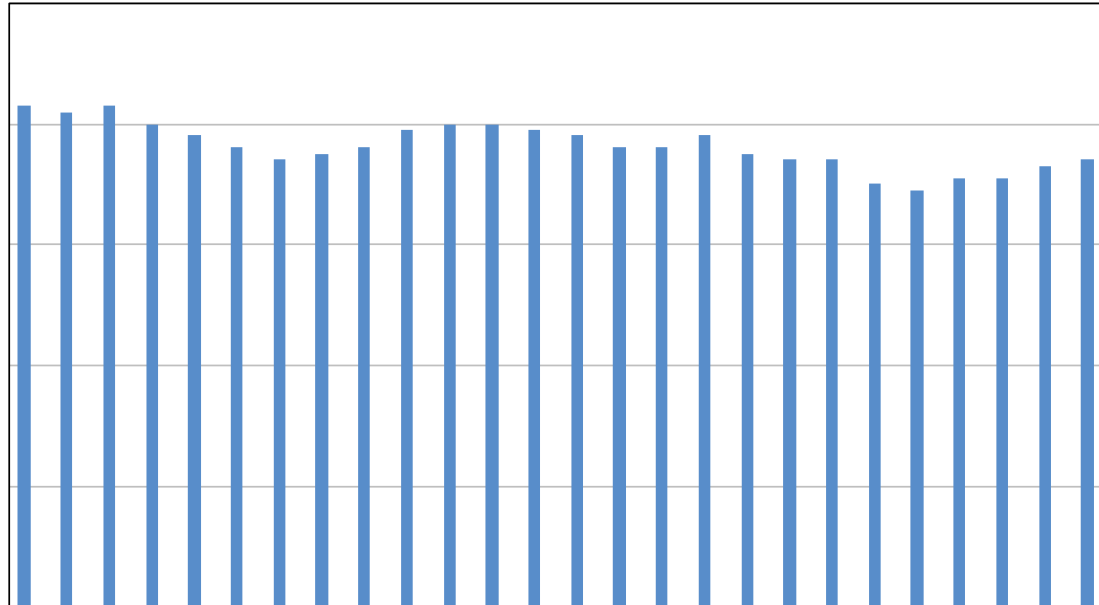
****April 2005 Passing Standard changed from -0.47 to -0.42 logits.

*****April 2008 Passing Standard changed from -0.42 to -0.37 logits.

*****April 2011 Passing Standard changed from -0.37 to -0.27 logits.

*****April 2014 Passing Standard changed from -0.27 to -0.21 logits

Figure 15. NCLEX-PN® Annual Pass Rates, April 1994 – December 2019



- *April 1994 Computer Adaptive Test (CAT) begins. Passing Standard -0.56 logits.
- **October 1996 Passing Standard changed from -0.56 to -0.51 logits.
- ***April 1999 Passing Standard changed from -0.51 to -0.47 logits.
- ****April 2005 Passing Standard changed from -0.47 to -0.42 logits.
- *****April 2008 Passing Standard changed from -0.42 to -0.37 logits.
- *****April 2011 Passing Standard changed from -0.37 to -0.27 logits.
- *****April 2014 Passing Standard changed from -0.27 to -0.21 logits.

Figure 16. NCLEX-PN® Volume for First-Time, U.S.-Educated Candidates

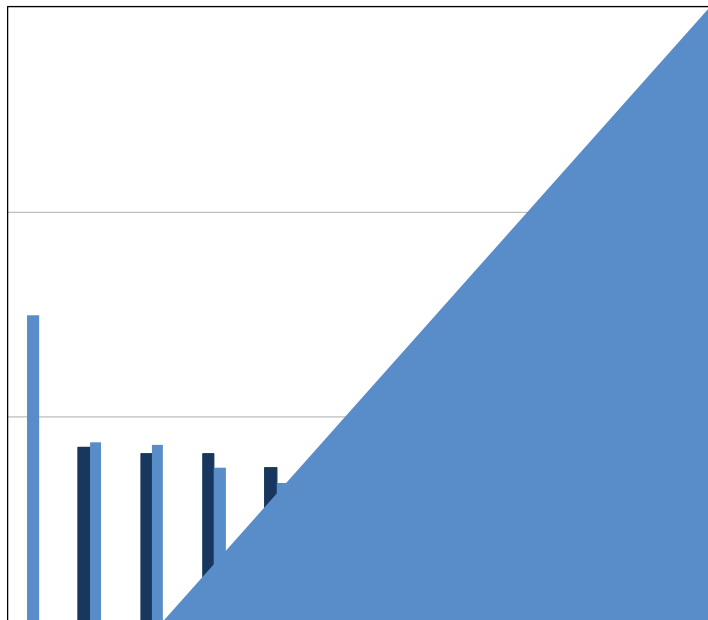
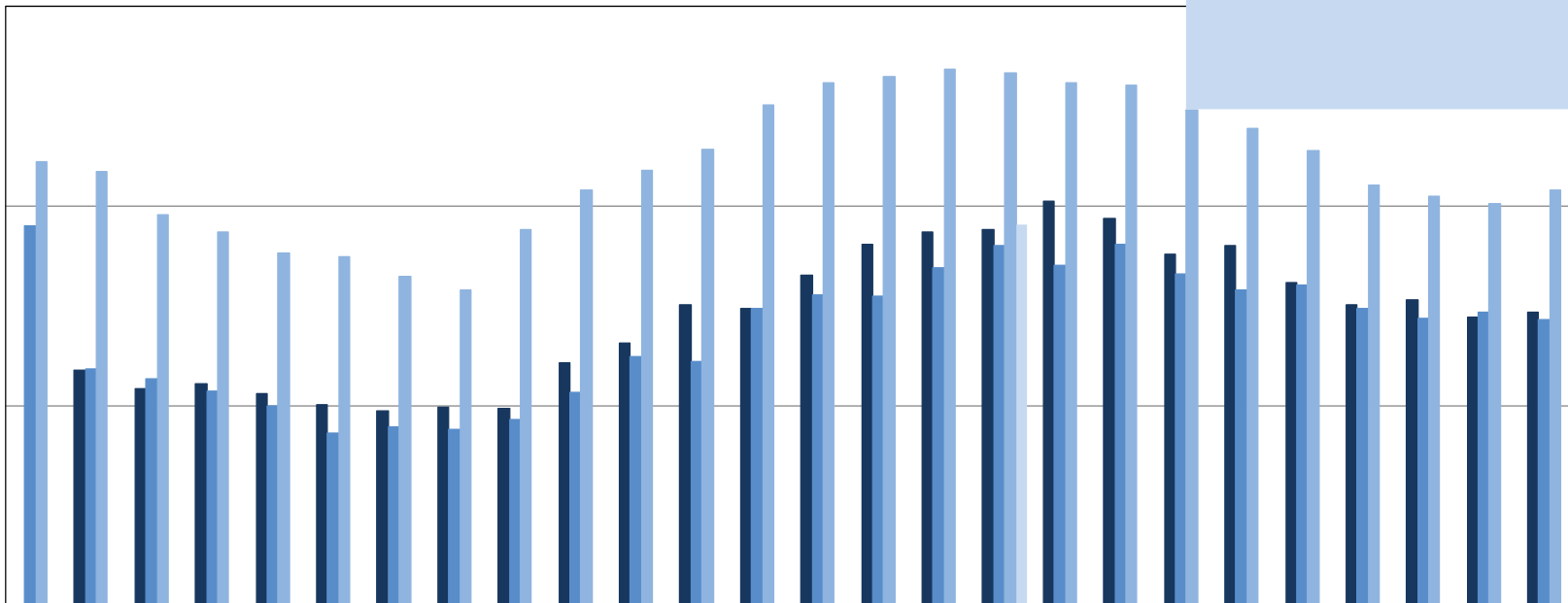


Figure 17. NCLEX-PN® Volume for All Candidates



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