

Request for Proposals

Version: April 2, 2024

Background information

The Medical-Surgical Nursing Certification Board (MSNCB[®]) is a certification board with a mission to validate excellence in medical-surgical nursing. MSNCB certifications include the Certified Medical-Surgical Registered Nurse (CMSRN[®]) and forthcoming Certified Acute-Care Virtual Registered Nurse (CAVRN) programs. The current CMSRN certificant base is over 30,000 RNs strong. In the last year, MSNCB administered approximately 3,300 CMSRN exams. MSNCB has completed beta testing of the CAVRN exam and plans to launch the program in Summer 2024.

MSNCB's contractual obligation with the current vendor concludes on June 30th, 2025.

Purpose and goals

The purpose of this Request for Proposals (RFP) is to invite businesses who specialize in test development for certification purposes to submit proposals to MSNCB.

We're currently seeking qualified vendors to support the administration of MSNCB's exams and the maintenance and improvement of our test banks. We also seek an item writing tool that will allow secure and nimble item review that delivers directly to the item bank. Our goal is to maintain a regular schedule of test development services and a robust bank of high-quality, statistically-sound items and forms, while providing a user-friendly scheduling and testing experience for candidates.

Budget and scope of work

The budget for this project is \$400,000 through the transition period, with reconsideration once complete.

The selected firm will provide development, review, editing, refinement, data analysis, performance reviews, and/or any other psychometric services related to MSNCB credentialing exams or the performance thereof.

Tasks include but may not be limited to the following criteria:

- Exam administration, including candidate registration, exam scheduling, and test delivery
- Exam development and psychometric services, as described in MSNCB's Exam Development Policy
- Reporting of candidate scores upon completion of the exam administration
- Reporting of test results and suggestions to improve testing strategies, processes, systems, and the overall candidate experience
- Client and candidate support
- Support for ABSNC Accreditation

Selection criteria

As a credentialing agency, MSNCB requires accreditation by the Accreditation Board of Specialty Nursing Certification (ABSNC). Vendors must have specialized knowledge of credentialing standards and accreditation requirements.

The ideal vendor:

- Has experience with subject matter expert collaboration, especially in the field of healthcare.
- Provides regular reporting on test bank status to maintain a level of transparency with the MSNCB and its management firm.
- Can track and keep all data necessary to maintain ABSNC accreditation and provide bi-annual reports.
- Has responsive customer service for management and testing candidates.
- Provides computer-based testing via remote proctoring and in nationwide testing facilities year-round, with daily options for scheduling and the ability to reschedule.
- Provides instant pass/fail results for test-takers and detailed score reports within 5 business days of test completion.
- Can grow with MSNCB, with the ability to build new certification programs as needed.
- Can support two-way API with our application platform (Learning Builder from Heuristic Solutions) and back-end access to management staff.
- Has an excellent track record of confidentiality and security of examination materials and client information.

Submission process and timeline.

Proposals must be submitted electronically by July 1st.

Vendors are expected to raise any and all questions no later than April 19th. Questions can be directed to the contact below. Please submit questions in writing. We will respond to your questions within two weeks of receipt.

Project Name of Description: Test Development Services

Company Name: MSNCB

Procurement Contact Person: Leeza Taboada

Telephone Number of PCP: 312-673-4935

Email Address of PCP: ltaboada@smithbuckin.com

Responses to questions received will be distributed to all vendors as a communiqué by April 24, 2024.

In the event that it becomes necessary for the MSNCB to provide additional clarifying data or information, or to revise any part of this RFP, the MSNCB will distribute either a revised RFP, or a supplement to the original RFP to vendors participating in the proposal bidding process.

Finalists will be notified by August 12th. Follow-up video conferences will be arranged for selected finalists between September 1st and September 16th. The award will be granted no later than October 1st.

Recommended Proposal Format.

Proposals must include the following sections containing the information requested:

1. **Statement of Work**- please describe all proposed procedures, methodologies, and supporting rationale you intend to use in completing each task as described in this request for proposal “budget and scope of work” section.
2. **Background Information** – Please include as much of the following information as possible in support of your proposal:
 - Provide a brief history of your company, including the number of years your firm has been in business, as well as the number of years of experience directly related to the scope of work described herein.
 - Describe your company’s mission.
 - Describe your company’s approach to innovation and creativity in furthering the best interests of your clients.
 - Provide a brief summary of your operations, including your organizational structure.
 - How many employees work for your company and how many would be dedicated to this project, both temporarily and permanently, through the duration of the contract? Please include names of both professional and nonprofessional staff assigned to the project, including name, educational credentials, job title, work experience relative to the tasks to be performed, and time allocated to the project.
 - Do you offer any feature(s) services that differentiate you from others that can add value to the proposed scope of work?
 - What distinguishes your company, services and products from your competition?
3. **Project Management Plan and Deliverables** – Please provide a comprehensive project management plan, inclusive of task sequencing, assignments of responsibility, ongoing monitoring, milestones, outcomes, and deliverables, especially as they reflect a transition plan of all the MSNCB certification exams from the current vendor to the new vendor (if applicable).
4. **Professional References** – include a list of references (minimum of three) whose size, program specifications, and technical requirements most closely resemble the MSNCB. Please include the organization name, address, telephone number, and contact person.
5. **Budget/Billing** – Costs must be delineated by each exam. Vendors are expected to break out any costs that are (one-time or recurring) for all proposed services, by exam. Further, vendors should differentiate costs that are fixed from those that are variable, such as those that will be affected by candidate volume. Include a description of standard operating procedures for billing and payment processing.
6. **Sample Memorandums of Understanding, Agreements, and Contracts** – Please include sample documents for services proposed.

Attachment 1



Policy Category: Certification, Recertification & Testing – General Administration
Policy Number: CRT-402
Policy Title: Exam Development Policy
Date Approved: March 11, 2024
Monitoring & Review
Schedule: March 2026

MSNCB participates in and provides oversight for the development and ongoing maintenance of the certification examination(s). MSNCB dedicated staff works in partnership with the test agency(cies) to ensure the exams are developed and maintained in a manner consistent with generally accepted psychometric, education testing practices, and national accreditation standards for certification programs.

Test Development Committee and Subject Matter Experts

The Test Development Committee is responsible for the development of the certification exams. Additional panels of subject matter experts (SMEs) may be appointed to conduct exam development activities as outlined in these policies.

MSNCB or its test agency(cies) will train SMEs to complete the activity to which they are assigned.

Ownership

All work developed by the Test Development Committee or other SMEs is the property of MSNCB.

Job Analysis

Job Analysis Studies will be conducted to identify and validate the knowledge and skills which will be measured by the examination. The results of the Job Analysis will serve as the basis for the examination.

MSNCB has determined that a Job Analysis will be conducted every five (5) years, or more frequently at the board's discretion. This determination is based on the frequency of substantive changes in the field and compliance with standards for professional certification programs.

Exam Specifications

The content for the examination will be determined based on the recommended content outline and content area weights developed following each job analysis. The final content outline and corresponding content weights will be approved by the MSNCB Board of Directors.

Item Writing and Review

Item writing and review activities are typically conducted annually. Item writers and reviewers are required to complete item development training, delivered by the test agency(cies), prior to writing and/or reviewing exam items.

All item development activities will be facilitated and monitored by the test agency(cies).

The development of all items for the exam will be directly linked to the approved content outline.

Once items have been written by trained SMEs, they will be reviewed for accuracy, clarity, non-bias, sensitivity, and consistency. Once an item has satisfactorily completed this initial review it will be added to the item bank. Newly written items will be pretested as unscored items before being included as scored (operational) items on a test form.

Item Bank

An item bank will be maintained which includes all items developed for the examination(s). MSNCB's testing agency(cies) will oversee the maintenance and security of the examination item bank.

Data for each item stored in the item bank includes current status (e.g., draft, active, retired), correct answer key, content outline linkage, references, and performance statistics.

Each item in the item bank is reviewed at least every three (3) years for quality control.

Exam Form Assembly and Approval

MSNCB is responsible for exam content and assembly of the exam forms.

New test forms are typically launched on an annual basis. Any test form in use for more than two (2) testing windows will undergo an obsolescence review facilitated by the psychometric consultant with a SME committee to ensure continued item accuracy and relevance. Decisions regarding the number of test forms and the frequency for replacing the exam forms will be made each year by the MSNCB Board in consultation with the psychometric consultant.

Draft examination forms will be assembled to include one hundred and twenty-five (125) scored items by the test development agency(ies) to meet the test specifications and will be reviewed and approved by the Test Development Committee. The draft form(s) will meet the requirements of the test specifications with respect to content and weighting and will be reviewed for bias and sensitivity. Each exam form will include twenty-five (25) unscored questions to be pre-tested.

Establishing the Passing Point

The passing point for the exam will be established using a criterion-reference technique. Qualified and trained SMEs will participate in determining the passing point working with the psychometric consultant.

The process used to determine the passing point will be documented as part of a cut score study report. The final passing point resulting from this process will be approved by the MSNCB Board of Directors. Any modifications to the recommended passing point will be documented in the final passing point study report along with the rationale for those changes.

Specific methodologies for establishing the passing score for exams and ensuring test forms are equivalent will be selected and documented by the psychometric consultant based on compliance with national accreditation standards.

A standard setting study will be conducted following completion of each job analysis study, at a minimum, but can be conducted more frequently to support programmatic requirements. Forms developed between job analysis studies will be equated to the base form.

Exam Analysis / Technical Reporting

Performance statistics will be calculated and retained for each exam item and each exam form. A statistical analysis will be performed by the psychometric consultant following each administration of the exam.

At least annually, a test analysis or technical report will be produced by the psychometric consultant and reviewed by MSNCB to evaluate the reliability and effectiveness of the examination and to determine any areas that must be reviewed or revised.

At a minimum, the technical reports will include a summary of the exam administration, the number of exam takers, the passing point and number of exam items, measures of average performance, measures of performance variability, reliability indices, pass-fail percentages, and recommendations from the psychometric consultant. The psychometric will analyze performance across all exam administration modalities to ensure comparability and identify potential irregularities.

Documentation

All examination development activities (including job analysis, item development, test form assembly, cut score studies, equating, and test/item analysis) will be documented in formal exam development reports by the contracted testing agency(ies).