



**Department of
Civil Service**

Test Guide

for the

Nutrition Services Administrator 1 and 2 Series

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INTRODUCTION

The New York State Department of Civil Service has developed this test guide to familiarize you with the multiple-choice test for the Nutrition Services Administrator 1 and 2 Series. This test guide provides a general description of the subject areas which will be tested and the different types of questions you may see on the test. The test questions for the Nutrition Services Administrator 1 and 2 Series will cover the following six subject areas:

- 1. ADMINISTRATIVE TECHNIQUES AND PRACTICES:** These questions test for a knowledge of management techniques and practices used in directing or assisting in directing a program component or an organizational segment. Questions cover such areas as interpreting policies, making decisions based on the context of the position in the organization, coordinating programs or projects, communicating with employees or the public, planning employee training, and researching and evaluating areas of concern.
- 2. CLINICAL DIETETICS:** These questions test for knowledge of contemporary clinical dietetics and nutrition, including the identification of dietary and nutritional conditions and problems of at-risk consumer populations and the methods of treating them. Topics may include the underlying chemistry and biology of food metabolism, the potential interaction of foods with drugs, the rationale behind special therapeutic diets, and the prescription of foods and food consistencies in accordance with a person's medical conditions and preferences.
- 3. ENSURING EFFECTIVE INTER/INTRA AGENCY COMMUNICATIONS:** These questions test for understanding of techniques for interacting effectively with individuals and agencies, to educate and inform them about topics of concern, to clarify agency programs or policies, to negotiate conflicts or resolve complaints, and to represent one's agency or program in a manner in keeping with good public relations practices. Questions may also cover interacting with the staff of one's own agency and/or that of other agencies in cooperative efforts of public outreach or service.
- 4. FOOD SERVICE MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICES:** These questions test for knowledge of planning, implementing, and evaluating a food service program. The questions will cover areas such as estimating program needs; allocating staff, equipment, and material resources; monitoring food safety and sanitation practices; and evaluating the performance and efficiency of a food service program.
- 5. PREPARING WRITTEN MATERIAL:** These questions test for the ability to present information clearly and accurately, and to organize paragraphs logically and comprehensibly. For some questions, you will be given information in two or three sentences followed by four restatements of the information. You must then choose the best version. For other questions, you will be given paragraphs with their sentences out of order. You must then choose, from four suggestions, the best order for the sentences.
- 6. SUPERVISION:** These questions test for knowledge of the principles and practices employed in planning, organizing, and controlling the activities of a work unit toward predetermined objectives. The concepts covered, usually in a situational question format, include such topics as assigning and reviewing work; evaluating performance; maintaining work standards; motivating and developing subordinates; implementing procedural change; increasing efficiency; and dealing with problems of absenteeism, morale, and discipline.

The next sections of this test guide explain how you will be tested in each of the subject areas listed above. A **TEST TASK** is provided for each subject area. This is an explanation of how a question is presented and how to correctly answer it. Read each explanation carefully. This test guide also provides at least one **SAMPLE QUESTION** for each subject area. The sample question is similar to the type of questions that will be presented on the actual test. This test guide provides the **SOLUTION** and correct answer to each sample question. You should study each sample question and solution in order to understand how the correct answer was determined.

SUBJECT AREA 1

ADMINISTRATIVE TECHNIQUES AND PRACTICES: These questions test for a knowledge of management techniques and practices used in directing or assisting in directing a program component or an organizational segment. Questions cover such areas as interpreting policies, making decisions based on the context of the position in the organization, coordinating programs or projects, communicating with employees or the public, planning employee training, and researching and evaluating areas of concern.

TEST TASK: You will be presented with situations in which you must apply knowledge of administrative principles and practices in order to answer the questions correctly.

SAMPLE QUESTION:

A training program in your agency has received a number of negative evaluations from the participants. You have been asked to determine whether changes should be made to the training program in response to these evaluations. Which one of the following actions should you take first in making this determination?

- A. Review the training methods.
- B. Review the content of the training materials.
- C. Review the goals of the training program.
- D. Review the evaluations with the training instructor.

Choice C is the correct answer to this sample question.

SOLUTION:

*This question asks for the action that you should take **first** in determining whether changes should be made to the training program.*

***Choice A** is not correct. Reviewing the training methods may result in changes to the program if the methods are faulty or inappropriate. But you cannot evaluate the methods unless you have a context against which these materials can be evaluated. You must first become familiar with the training goals before you can evaluate the training methods.*

***Choice B** is not correct. Reviewing the content of the training materials may result in changes to the program if the content is not appropriate. But you must first know what the goals of the training program are before you can evaluate the appropriateness of the training content.*

***Choice C** is the correct answer to this question. The most important consideration in determining whether changes should be made to the training program is determining whether the program met its training goals. You must first become familiar with those goals before you can make this determination.*

***Choice D** is not correct. Although you may eventually review the evaluations with the training instructor, you must first become familiar with the goals of the training to provide a context against which you can discuss the content of the participant evaluations.*

SUBJECT AREA 2

CLINICAL DIETETICS: These questions test for knowledge of contemporary clinical dietetics and nutrition, including the identification of dietary and nutritional conditions and problems of at-risk consumer populations and the methods of treating them. Topics may include the underlying chemistry and biology of food metabolism, the potential interaction of foods with drugs, the rationale behind special therapeutic diets, and the prescription of foods and food consistencies in accordance with a person's medical conditions and preferences.

TEST TASK: You will be presented with situations similar to those encountered by clinical dietitians on the job. You must apply knowledge of contemporary clinical dietetics in order to select the most appropriate course of action to take with regard to the nutritional problems of at-risk consumers.

SAMPLE QUESTION:

When treating a patient who has been diagnosed with a milk allergy, which one of the following should you do first?

- A. Eliminate all dairy products from the patient's diet, and add a calcium supplement.
- B. Try small amounts of lactose-containing foods, and gradually increase them.
- C. Have the patient consume dairy foods separately from other foods.
- D. Prescribe only fat-free dairy products.

Choice A is the correct answer to this sample question.

SOLUTION:

*This question asks for what should be done **first** when treating a patient who has been diagnosed with a milk allergy.*

***Choice A** is the correct answer to this question. If a patient has an allergy to milk, the first step is to eliminate all sources of milk protein. A calcium supplement should be added to compensate for the loss of calcium resulting from the elimination of dairy products.*

***Choice B** is not correct. Lactose is a sugar found in milk. A patient with a milk allergy may not be able to tolerate even small amounts of lactose-containing food products.*

***Choice C** is not correct. A patient who is allergic to milk should not consume any dairy foods.*

***Choice D** is not correct. **No** dairy products should be prescribed for a patient who is allergic to milk.*

SUBJECT AREA 3

ENSURING EFFECTIVE INTER/INTRA AGENCY COMMUNICATIONS: These questions test for understanding of techniques for interacting effectively with individuals and agencies, to educate and inform them about topics of concern, to clarify agency programs or policies, to negotiate conflicts or resolve complaints, and to represent one's agency or program in a manner in keeping with good public relations practices. Questions may also cover interacting with the staff of one's own agency and/or that of other agencies in cooperative efforts of public outreach or service.

TEST TASK: You will be presented with a variety of situations in which you must apply knowledge of how best to interact with other people.

SAMPLE QUESTION:

A person approaches you expressing anger about a recent action by your department. Which one of the following should be your first response to this person?

- A. Interrupt to say you cannot discuss the situation until he calms down.
- B. Say you are sorry that he has been negatively affected by your department's action.
- C. Listen and express understanding that he has been upset by your department's action.
- D. Give him an explanation of the reasons for your department's action.

Choice C is the correct answer to this sample question.

SOLUTION:

Choice A is not correct. *It would be inappropriate to interrupt. In addition, saying that you cannot discuss the situation until the person calms down will likely aggravate the person further.*

Choice B is not correct. *Apologizing for your department's action implies that the action was improper.*

Choice C is the correct answer to this question. *By listening and expressing understanding that your department's action has upset the person, you demonstrate that you have heard and understand the person's feelings and point of view.*

Choice D is not correct. *While an explanation of the reasons for the action may be appropriate at a later time, at this moment the person is angry and would not be receptive to such an explanation.*

SUBJECT AREA 4

FOOD SERVICE MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICES: These questions test for knowledge of planning, implementing, and evaluating a food service program. The questions will cover areas such as estimating program needs; allocating staff, equipment, and material resources; monitoring food safety and sanitation practices; and evaluating the performance and efficiency of a food service program.

TEST TASK: You will be presented with situations in which you must apply knowledge of food service management principles and practices in order to answer the questions correctly.

SAMPLE QUESTION:

Of the following, which one is the first factor to be considered in setting up or reorganizing a food service program?

- A. cost of labor
- B. number of staff to employ
- C. type of equipment needed
- D. type of foods to be served

Choice D is the correct answer to this sample question.

SOLUTION:

*This question asks for the **first** factor to be considered in setting up or reorganizing a food service program.*

***Choice A** is not correct. Although food service managers must be concerned with the cost of labor, until the type of foods to be served has been decided, the number of staff required and the cost of labor cannot be determined.*

***Choice B** is not correct. The number of staff to employ cannot be determined until the type of foods to be served has been decided. For example, if you serve pre-packaged and cook-chill foods, fewer staff would be required than if you serve foods that must be prepared from scratch.*

***Choice C** is not correct. The type of equipment needed cannot be determined until the type of foods to be served and how they will be prepared has been decided. Other factors, such as whether meals will be served on trays or family style, transportation distances, and whether food will be cooked from scratch, also need to be known before the type of equipment needed can be determined.*

***Choice D** is the correct answer to this question. A food service manager must first decide the type of foods to be served, before staff, equipment, or cost can be determined.*

SUBJECT AREA 5

PREPARING WRITTEN MATERIAL: These questions test for the ability to present information clearly and accurately, and to organize paragraphs logically and comprehensibly. For some questions, you will be given information in two or three sentences followed by four restatements of the information. You must then choose the best version. For other questions, you will be given paragraphs with their sentences out of order. You must then choose, from four suggestions, the best order for the sentences.

TEST TASK:

There are two separate test tasks in this subject area.

- For the first, **Information Presentation**, you will be given information in two or three sentences, followed by four restatements of the information. You must then choose the best version.
- For the second, **Paragraph Organization**, you will be given paragraphs with their sentences out of order, and then be asked to choose, from four suggestions, the best order for the sentences.

INFORMATION PRESENTATION SAMPLE QUESTION:

Martin Wilson failed to take proper precautions. His failure to take proper precautions caused a personal injury accident.

Which one of the following best presents the information above?

- A. Martin Wilson failed to take proper precautions that caused a personal injury accident.
- B. Proper precautions, which Martin Wilson failed to take, caused a personal injury accident.
- C. Martin Wilson's failure to take proper precautions caused a personal injury accident.
- D. Martin Wilson, who failed to take proper precautions, was in a personal injury accident.

Choice C is the best answer to this sample question.

SOLUTION:

Choice A conveys the incorrect impression that proper precautions caused a personal injury accident.

Choice B conveys the incorrect impression that proper precautions caused a personal injury accident.

Choice C best presents the original information: Martin Wilson failed to take proper precautions, and this failure caused a personal injury accident.

Choice D states that Martin Wilson was in a personal injury accident. The original information states that Martin Wilson caused a personal injury accident, but it does not state that Martin Wilson was in a personal injury accident.

SUBJECT AREA 5 – CONTINUED

PREPARING WRITTEN MATERIAL (CONTINUED)

PARAGRAPH ORGANIZATION SAMPLE QUESTION:

The following question is based upon a group of sentences. The sentences are shown out of sequence, but when correctly arranged, they form a connected, well-organized paragraph. Read the sentences, and then answer the question about the best arrangement of these sentences.

1. Eventually, they piece all of this information together and make a choice.
2. Before actually deciding upon a job in nutrition services, people usually think about several possibilities.
3. They imagine themselves in different situations, and in so doing, they probably think about their interests, goals, and abilities.
4. Choosing an occupation in the field of nutrition services is an important decision to make.

Which one of the following is the best arrangement of these sentences?

- A. 2-4-1-3
- B. 2-3-4-1
- C. 4-2-1-3
- D. 4-2-3-1

Choice D is the best answer to this sample question.

SOLUTION:

Choices A and C present the information in the paragraph out of logical sequence. In both **A** and **C**, sentence 1 comes before sentence 3. The key element in the organization of this paragraph is that sentence 3 contains the information to which sentence 1 refers; therefore, in logical sequence, sentence 3 should come before sentence 1.

Choice B also presents the information in the paragraph out of logical sequence. Choice **B** places sentence 4 in between sentence 1 and sentence 3, thereby interrupting the logical sequence of the information in the paragraph.

Choice D presents the information in the paragraph in the best logical sequence. Sentence 4 introduces the main idea of the paragraph: “choosing an occupation in the field of nutrition services.” Sentences 2-3-1 then follow up on this idea by describing, in order, the steps involved in making such a choice.

SUBJECT AREA 6

SUPERVISION: These questions test for knowledge of the principles and practices employed in planning, organizing, and controlling the activities of a work unit toward predetermined objectives. The concepts covered, usually in a situational question format, include such topics as assigning and reviewing work; evaluating performance; maintaining work standards; motivating and developing subordinates; implementing procedural change; increasing efficiency; and dealing with problems of absenteeism, morale, and discipline.

TEST TASK: You will be presented with situations in which you must apply knowledge of the principles and practices of supervision in order to answer the questions correctly.

SAMPLE QUESTION:

Assume that the unit you supervise is given a new work assignment and that you are unsure about the proper procedure to use in performing this assignment. Which one of the following actions should you take first in this situation?

- A. Obtain input from your staff.
- B. Consult other unit supervisors who have had similar assignments.
- C. Use an appropriate procedure from a similar assignment that you are familiar with.
- D. Discuss the matter with your supervisor.

Choice D is the correct answer to this sample question.

SOLUTION:

Choice A is not correct. *Since this assignment is new for your unit, your staff would not be expected to be more knowledgeable than you about the proper procedure.*

Choice B is not correct. *Although discussing this matter with other supervisors may increase your knowledge of the new assignment, similar assignments performed in other units may differ in some important way from your new assignment. Other units may also function differently from your unit, so the procedures used to perform similar assignments may differ accordingly.*

Choice C is not correct. *Since this assignment is new for your unit, you would have no way of knowing whether the procedure from a similar assignment is appropriate to use. You would need someone with the appropriate knowledge, usually your supervisor, to determine if the procedure from a similar assignment could be used before you actually employed this procedure in the performance of your new assignment.*

Choice D is the correct answer to this question. *Your supervisor is more likely to be informed about what procedure may be appropriate for work that he or she assigns to you than would other unit supervisors or your staff. Even if your supervisor does not know what procedure is appropriate, a decision regarding which procedure to use should be made with his or her participation, since he or she has the ultimate responsibility for your unit's work.*

GENERAL TEST-TAKING GUIDELINES

Read all test directions and instructions carefully. Make sure that you carefully read and follow all directions and any special instructions for the test. If sample questions are provided, do them for practice. *Make sure you understand the directions and instructions before you start to answer the questions.*

Make sure you are answering the correct test questions in the correct test booklets. The particular test you are taking may involve skipping some questions in the test booklet or may involve answering questions in more than one test booklet. You are responsible for making sure you get the right test booklets for your particular test and for determining which questions you are to answer. Refer to your test materials for information on which test booklets and questions you are to answer.

Make sure the choice you mark on your answer sheet matches the question you are answering in the test booklet. Most multiple-choice tests are scanned and scored by machine. You will not get credit for choices you mark in the wrong place on the answer sheet. Check your work to make sure that the number of the question you are answering in the test booklet matches the choice you are marking on your answer sheet.

Make sure you record all your answers on the answer sheet. Only the answers you mark on your answer sheet will be counted toward your score.

Make sure you fill in the circles for your choices completely and carefully. Avoid making stray pencil marks on your answer sheet. The scanning machine may interpret these marks to be your answers.

STRATEGIES THAT MAY IMPROVE YOUR TEST PERFORMANCE

Budget your time wisely

Take note of the test time allowance and of the starting and stopping times. Look at the whole test first and then decide how much time to allow yourself for each part.

You may want to answer the easy questions first. You get just as much credit for an easy question as for a hard one. Do not take too much time trying to answer the difficult questions. Jot down the number of the difficult questions and then come back to them later if you have time. (*If you do skip a question in the test booklet, make sure you skip that answer on your answer sheet as well.*)

Keep track of the time as you go through the test. Know how much time you have and how many questions you have left to do. If some parts of your test are separately timed, work as rapidly as you can but stay calm and pay attention to the time limit.

Read each question carefully

Make sure you read what is actually printed in the test booklet. The questions are designed to test your knowledge, skills, or abilities in a subject area. They are not meant to trick you or to be deceptive.

- Read each question carefully, follow the directions given, and answer each question based on the information given and on the actual question asked.
- After you read the question carefully, read each choice carefully.
- Make sure that you understand each choice before you decide which one is best.
- Pick the one choice that best answers the question given.
- Do not jump to conclusions.
- Be thorough and think about all the choices. If you do not read each choice carefully, you could easily miss the best one.

Be alert to key words

Key words establish a condition that only the *correct* answer meets. Words like *best*, *greatest*, *always*, or *most* are examples of key words. If a question asks you to identify the *best* choice among four given, it may be that each of the four choices is a *possible* answer, but only *one* of the four choices is the *best* answer. To answer this type of question correctly, you must carefully read and compare all the choices given.

Here are some examples of questions that contain key words. These examples may be different than the types of questions used in the tests covered by this test guide. They are presented here only to illustrate the importance of key words.

1. Of the following foods, which one provides the most vitamin C in a one-cup serving?
 - A. grapefruit juice
 - B. sliced peaches
 - C. mashed potatoes
 - D. chopped broccoli

Answer:

This question asks which of the foods listed provides the **most** vitamin C in a one-cup serving. The key word in this question is **most**. All of the foods mentioned in the choices contain some vitamin C. Many people know that citrus fruits, like oranges, lemons, and grapefruits, are good sources of vitamin C. That makes choice A look attractive. But one cup of broccoli actually contains more vitamin C than one cup of grapefruit juice. Choice D is the **best** answer. To answer this question correctly, you must read **all four** choices carefully before you can determine the **best** answer.

2. Of the following, which one is generally the best way to repair a Compton machine that will not start?

- A. Replace the entire engine.
- B. Replace the ignition wires.
- C. Clean the carburetor.
- D. Clean the valves.

Answer:

This question asks which one of the choices listed is generally the best way to repair a Compton machine that will not start. The key words in this question are **generally** and **best**. Assume that in 99 out of 100 cases, the best way to repair a Compton machine that will not start is to replace the ignition wires. Then choice B, replace the ignition wires, is **generally** the **best** way to do the repair. Choice B is the correct answer to this question.

Questions that use words like *generally* are looking for the rule, not the exception. Other key words of this type are *common, likely, more, often, primarily, probably, typically, and usually*. When you see these words in a question, look for the choice that would be correct most of the time.

- Do not select the choice that would be correct only some of the time or on rare occasion.
- Be alert to questions that use words like *disadvantage, except, least, and not*.
- If the question asks about a *disadvantage*, be sure not to choose an advantage as your answer. Words that begin with *non-* or *un-* are ways of saying *not*.

3. If grease in a pan catches fire, it is **unwise** to do which one of the following?

- A. Cover the pan with a lid.
- B. Pour water on the fire.

Answer:

This question asks you to identify which action is unwise to do if grease in a pan catches fire. The key word in this question is **unwise**. This word should alert you that the question is looking for what you should **not** do, rather than what you should do if grease in a pan catches fire. Choice A, covering the pan with a lid, would smother the fire by cutting off the oxygen it needs to burn. Choice A is what you *should* do if grease in a pan catches fire. However, since this question asks what is unwise to do, choice A is the *wrong* answer to this question. Choice B, pouring water on the fire, would cause the grease and fire in the pan to spatter because water and grease do not mix. This could cause injury or make the fire spread. So, it is *unwise* to pour water on the fire. Therefore, Choice B is the *correct* answer to this question.

4. If an alarm goes off in a mechanical room and the situation appears to be a threat to health or safety, what should you do first?
- A. Turn off the power.
 - B. Call your supervisor.
 - C. Call the security staff.
 - D. Have people leave the area.

Answer:

This question asks what you should do first if an alarm goes off in a mechanical room. The key word in this question is **first**. When a question uses the word **first**, consider the choices in the order in which they should be done. For the question above, all four choices list actions that should be taken. The important thing to know is which to do first in the situation. Since the situation could be life-threatening or could result in injury, the first thing to do is to have people leave the area. This allows people to remain safe while the reason for the alarm is determined and the situation is fixed. Choice D is the first thing to do. If the situation were **not** life-threatening, choice A, turning off the power, might be the first thing to do.

When you see a question like this, make sure you understand the question and the situation thoroughly. When you think you have decided the right order for the actions, mark down the choice that you think is the first action to take in the situation. That way, you think about the whole series of possible actions to take, not just one action by itself, and you are more likely to choose the correct answer.

Break large problems into smaller parts

A very large or complex problem may make more sense if you break it down and look at it one part at a time. Make diagrams or notes on your scratch paper to help you understand each of the separate parts, and how those parts collectively make up the whole problem. Sometimes you can work backwards from the answer to see which answer best fits the problem. Try each answer, in turn, to find the one that works best.

Use a process of elimination

Most multiple-choice questions give you four possible choices. You may not be sure of the answer, but you may see right away that one or two of the choices are not correct. If this is the case, immediately eliminate the choices you know are not correct. Then, just think about the others. Pick the best of the choices that remain. Even if one choice seems only a little better than the others, pick that one. If you can eliminate one or more of the choices and make an educated guess about the choices that remain, your chances of success are better than if you make a completely wild guess.

Guess if you do not know the answer to a question

If you do not answer a question, you will not get credit for it. If you guess correctly, you will get credit. Therefore, if you are not sure of an answer, you should still try to answer the question.

HELPFUL TIPS

Your attitude and approach to the test will influence how well you perform. A positive attitude will help you do your best.

Before the test...

- Study and review this guide to become familiar with what the test will cover.
- Study and review the subject areas that will be covered on the test.
- Study and review the New York State Department of Civil Service publication, "How to Take a Multiple-Choice Test." It is available on the same page as this and other test guides through www.cs.ny.gov, Job Seekers, Employment Opportunities with NYS Government, State Examinations, Test Guides and Resource Books. The direct link is: <https://www.cs.ny.gov/pio/publications/howtotakeamultiplechoicetest.pdf>. It includes a considerable amount of information on Civil Service tests, including a section titled, General Test-Taking Guidelines." This includes advice such as: **Read each test question carefully and completely. Read all of the choices before selecting your answer.**

On the day of the test...

- Arrive at the test site on time.
- Bring your Admission Notice, two No. 2 pencils, a photo ID containing your signature, a quiet lunch or snack, and any other **allowed** materials.
- Do **NOT** bring this test guide to the test site.

At the test site...

- Do **NOT** bring cell phones, beepers, headphones, or any electronic or other communication devices to the test site.
- The use of such devices anywhere on the grounds of the test site (in addition to the test room, this includes hallways, restrooms, building, grounds, and parking lots) could result in your disqualification.
- Do **NOT** use the calculator function on your cell phone.

During the test...

- Read and follow all directions on your Admission Notice, test booklets, answer sheets, and Candidate Directions.
- Follow the Monitor's instructions.
- Keep track of time.

After the test...

- Do **NOT** remove any test materials from the test room.
- Do **NOT** paraphrase, reconstruct, or reproduce the test material in any way.
- Do **NOT** discuss the test material with others.

TEST SECURITY

The test you will be taking is the property of the New York State Department of Civil Service.

1. Candidates may not remove test material from the test site and may not reproduce, reconstruct, or discuss the test content with others.
2. Unauthorized possession or disclosure of the test material is prohibited by law and punishable by imprisonment and/or a fine.
3. Candidates violating test security may be disqualified from appointment to positions for which the examination is being held and from being a candidate for any civil service examination for five years.
4. You should not discuss the questions and answers, even in general terms, after you take the test.
5. You should be careful that you do not inadvertently violate test security and put yourself at risk.

It is the policy of the New York State Department of Civil Service to provide reasonable accommodation to ensure effective communication of information to individuals with disabilities. If you need an auxiliary aid or service to make this information available to you, please contact the New York State Department of Civil Service Public Information Office at (518) 457-9375.



Department of Civil Service

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