

What Is The PBDS?

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In today's healthcare environment, most [travel nursing positions](#) come with some form of competency testing to secure the [travel nursing job](#). While there are many different forms of testing, this article will address PBDS testing or Performance Based Development System.

What Is The PBDS?

The PBDS was designed by competency expert, Dr. Dorothy del Bueno. The PBDS has been around since 1985 and is currently used by approximately 500 hospitals nationwide. The intended purpose of the PBDS was to: maintain quality of care, improve cost effectiveness of education and training, reduce and prevent risks and enhance customer satisfaction. The PBDS was designed to help hospitals customize an orientation program for health professionals by "smoking out" areas of weakness. Today, however, many hospitals use it as a pass / fail assessment tool for travel nurses.

So What Does The PBDS Focus On?

The PBDS is centered on 3 main topics: (1) **Critical thinking** - doing the right things for the right reasons: problem recognition, risk & problem management, differentiating of priority and urgency and application of knowledge (2) **Interpersonal Relation Skills** - being a good citizen: conflict resolution, customer satisfaction and team building (3) **Technical Skills** - doing the right things: safe performance of procedures and effective use of equipment.

The assessment components of the PBDS include:

- Sophisticated video simulations
- Visual exercises
- Audio disks

The time usually allotted to complete the test is 4-6 hours.

How Do I Prepare For The PBDS?

Before we discuss how to prepare, let's first focus on the good news. To qualify as a traveler, you must have at least 1 year current experience in your area of specialty. In all likelihood, you have several years experience. So, you know your job, the typical patient population you serve, and the disease processes you will encounter in your specialty. While taking the PBDS, you will be able to call on this experience to guide you through.

While taking the PBDS, you will have to consider all aspects of the nursing process. For example: You will be shown a video simulation. You will be expected to identify the problem, determine what you believe the physician will order based on the information

provided, and assess what interventions you will need to take and prioritize them in order of importance. You will need to do all this while giving consideration to patient safety, use of equipment, team building, customer satisfaction and any potential conflicts that might arise and how to resolve them.

The test also focuses on what a prudent nurse must do, should do, and could do in a given situation.

When answering the questions, remember to write down every step you would take to promote the best outcome for the scenario. For example: Your patient's morning blood sugar level is 40. Your patient is cold, pale, diaphoretic, anxious, and experiencing nausea. You would probably: put the patient in bed, give some orange juice, notify the physician, hold the morning glucophage, order another blood glucose level, and document the care. Remember all steps...it is usually the small routine actions that get overlooked. Think in terms of a step by step manner and your rationale for each step.

Refresh your memory on traditional patient diagnoses that you would see in your specialty area. Start with the head and work down, covering all systems and related disease processes.

Also think of some interpersonal scenarios' that might occur in your department: What would you do if you witnessed another nurse being verbally abusive to a patient. How would you respond if your charge nurse asked you to orient another nurse?

*** The PBDS does not use multiple choice questioning***

THE KEYS IN TAKING AND PASSING THE PBDS TESTING

This test focuses on Critical Thinking Skills. The goal is to find out how well you can "think on your feet". Knowing "how to take this test" is the key in passing it. As an RN critical thinking is second nature to you. Though there are many agencies that offer very intense study guides for this testing, the reality is that you know how to do your job. Passing this test is a matter of knowing how to take it; to know what answers those who score the test are looking for.

IMPORTANT TO KNOW:

1. Watch the ENTIRE video. **DO NOT look away.** Do NOT assume you know the answer based on the preliminary information you received on the patient. **This is VERY, VERY IMPORTANT!** There will be something in the video that would change your answer. That "something" may only be shown briefly so again it is VERY important to NOT look away during the video. You will only have the opportunity to view the video ONCE!
2. DO NOT take notes during the video. The video for each patient will be short, you won't need notes and taking them would cause you to look away from the video... referring back to statement number one.

3. When answering be sure to explain in detail step by step everything you would do. Start with the most important thing to the least important that if time permitted you would do but not critical.
4. Write every single step you would take if you were actually in that patient's room no matter how obvious that step would be. Picture just a regular day on the floor and you are walking into a room and see a patient with some abnormal symptoms. Imagine the video is your virtual patient. Close your eyes see the situation and type exactly what you would do.
 - a. If the patient goes into Cardiac Arrest don't forget to say that the first thing would be to call a code blue.
 - b. Along with the intervention give a corresponding rational for why you did it. You can go back to your interventions but once the video is over you cannot access it again so watch it closely.
 - c. If the intervention must be done stat then make sure you say that, very important that you convey to those evaluating your answers that you would do this STAT so say it.
 - d. Don't forget to put when you would call the doctor if that is what you would do on the floor. The rational is simple; it is his/her patient he/she needs to be aware of change in patient status and also to obtain orders for the next treatment. List what orders you anticipate getting before you call the MD.
 - e. Numbering the interventions and the corresponding rational will help to keep your answers organized to reduce misleading those scoring your answers.

Remember to remain calm, take deep breaths and rely on your nursing knowledge and experience. Just trust yourself and don't let anxiety get the best of you.