

# Project-Based Internship Background and Details

## C-NET

<http://CNETNurse.com>

The Project-Based Internship enables students to have a meaningful experiential learning opportunity. Students will work in teams to conduct all research and project activities within the limits of the online classroom. The project will allow students to make a real contribution to an organization's challenges or opportunities.

Center for Nursing Education and Testing Inc. (C-NET) is a testing agency based in New Jersey. They have been in existence since 1992 and provide a full range of test development and administration services to meet nursing assessment needs. The company employs 13 people who are test developers, do item analysis, customer service, application review, and other administrative duties. C-NET focuses on specialty nursing testing, and they develop assessments and exams for each specialty nursing field while working with clients (Boards for each specialty) to achieve the highest quality, reliability and validity in the tests they develop. C-NET partners with a company called PSI, who administers all their tests via CBT. All certification credentials are national - US-nursing based credentials. Additionally, there is some testing from Canada who uses the same model and licensing exam as the US. Research will be completed on the test development and assessment industry, as well as on competency testing as it relates to nursing.

This project will focus on doing research that will help NET gain valuable information that will help shape the organization's future growth and development. C-NET's staff and consultants have extensive expertise in the development and administration of standardized tests in nursing, including certification testing for specialty nursing practice, preadmission testing for RN and LPN schools of nursing, achievement tests for nursing practice settings and test construction workshops for nurse educators in schools and practice settings.

C-NET currently develops and administers examinations for the Medical-Surgical, Nephrology, Urology, Dermatology, Addictions, Radiology, and Plastic Surgical Nursing Certification boards. These specialties can have anywhere from 2- 6 levels of expertise a nurse will need to complete. C-NET only works with specialty groups to monitor assessments, analyze results, check for validity and reliability of tests, analyze items and give feedback to each specialized Board. All of the Boards C-NET is affiliated with and the credentials for each are listed on C-NET's website, as well as each exam application fee. Assume C-NET collects **\$50 - \$75 per examination administered.**

C-NET's largest **income** comes from the groups below:

*Medical Surgical Nursing Certification - test 6,500 per year*

*Certified Clinical Hemodialysis Technician - test 6,500 per year*

*Radiology Nursing Certification - test 165 per year*

*Certified Addictions Registered Nurse - test 100-150 per year*

*Certified Addictions Registered Nurse - Advanced Practice - test 40-60 per year*

*Certified Aesthetic Nurse Specialists - test 75 per year*

*Urology RN - test 50-60 per year*

*All other groups tend to test at or below 50 per year.*

C-NET is looking to grow their business and possibly add new nursing competency testing. The analysis you do will help give them information and recommendations they need to be successful. Your report will help them understand where they fit in the field and how they can grow. The overall goal identifies what your research focus should be.

## **OVERALL GOAL**

**The primary goal for C-NET is to grow revenue by 15%.**

**As secondary goals, GROWTH can also be defined as: additional tests developed (e.g. Competency tests), more applicants taking their tests, increasing number of hospitals using their tests, more Specialty Boards to work with. No specific target numbers have been identified.**

**C-NET would like to grow their customer base, board affiliations, product offerings, knowledge base, understanding of industry, environment and competition.**

There are five sections to this overall paper. Each team will be assigned one area, however throughout the course we will be working together to make sure the entire project is consistent. The five sections are:

- I. External Environmental Analysis
- II. Industry Analysis
- III. Competitive Analysis
- IV. Product Analysis/Development
- V. Marketing Analysis

# **I. External Environmental Analysis - PESTEL**

## ***Background to this section***

The external environment of an organization are those factors outside the company that affect the company's ability to function. The company needs to understand the external environment in order to make sure they are responding to, adjusting to, and adapting to changes in the environment.

A **PESTEL** Analysis is the concept used as a tool by companies to track the environment they're operating in or are planning to launch a new project/product/service etc.

The **PESTEL** Analysis answers 6 key questions:

**Political** - What are the political factors that are likely to affect the business?

**Economic** - What are the economic factors that will affect the business?

**Sociological** - What cultural aspects are likely to affect the business?

**Technological** - What technological changes may affect the business?

**Legal** - What current and impending legislation that will affect the business?

**Environmental**- What are the environmental considerations that may affect the business?

This portion of the paper should contain:

1. Abstract: (written after the entire section is completed): It usually contains a brief statement of the problem or proposal covered in the major document(s), background information, concise analysis, main conclusions/recommendations, and financial implications.
2. Introduction: Introduce this portion of the paper (one paragraph).
3. Analysis
4. Recommendations – need to include financial implications
5. References in proper APA format (there should also be in-text citations for each of the references listed in the reference page).
6. Appendices – charts, tables, additional information to support your main analysis and recommendation.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** These sections cannot be done individually. The entire team needs to work together on the analysis. Then use the entire analysis to come to conclusions and recommendations as a team. Based upon these recommendations determine financial implications. Team members will be expected to communicate with each other in the Group Discussion Boards area in this virtual classroom. Please take advantage of the “file exchange” feature to share the areas of the project with your team members as they develop.

## ***Analysis:***

In general, what is meant by the external environment and why is it important? What factors in the external environment currently affect the client/project? Why is understanding the impact of the external environment important to the firm/project? What factors in the external environment currently impact the firm/project? What are some of the ways the client can position themselves to deal with them? Is the company's external environment more or less favorable right now? How do they handle the various challenges before them? What changes, costs and impacts will your recommendations have? What are some of the ways the client can position itself to deal with the external environment?

Please note, the categories below represent some broad aspects of the external environment and they may not have equal effect on the project.

### **Political Factors**

Political factors relate to the pressures and opportunities brought by political institutions and to what degree the government policies impact the business. Some areas you may research include: government policy and change, funding, grants and initiatives, lobbying and pressure groups, elections and political trends, internal political issues, corruption, bureaucracy, healthcare issues, etc.

### **Economic Factors**

Economic factors relate to economic policies, economic structures and to what degree the economy impacts the business. Some areas you may research include: local economy, economic factors that affect hospitals, economy trends, seasonality issues, industry growth, etc.

### **Social Factors**

Social factors relate to the cultural aspects, attitudes and beliefs, that will affect the demand for a company's products and how the business operates. Some areas you may research include: demographics, media views of the industry, work ethic, brand, company, technology image, healthcare trends, etc.

### **Technological Factors**

Technological factors relate to the technological aspects, innovations, barriers and incentives, and to what degree these impact the business. Some areas you may research include: emerging technologies, maturity of technology, research and innovation, information and communication, competitor technology development, etc.

### **Legal Factors**

Legal factors relate to the laws, regulation and legislation that will affect the way the business operates, current and future healthcare legislation, regulatory bodies and processes, consumer protection, health and safety regulations, competitive regulations, industry-specific regulations, etc.

### **Environmental Factors**

Environmental factors relate to the ecological and environmental aspects that will affect the demand for a company's products and how that business operates. Some areas you may research include: environmental regulations, stress, public health, importance of specialty nursing, etc.

**Recommendations:** Based on the above external environmental analysis we recommend implementing the following initiatives. Please explain why. If you have actions you are not recommending, you may also state them and explain why. Be sure to consider the financial implications of your decisions. **DO NOT** just answer these questions and conduct analyses. The finished product needs to be a cohesive analysis of the external environment.

## II. Industry Analysis – Test Development/Certification - Nursing

### *Background to This Section*

An Industry Analysis is designed to provide a business with an idea of the complexity of an industry. Industry Analysis involves reviewing the economic, political, and market factors influencing the way an industry develops. The major factors include the power wielded by suppliers and buyers, the condition of competitors, and the likelihood of new market entrants.

This portion of the paper should contain:

1. Abstract: It usually contains a brief statement of the problem or proposal covered in the major document(s), background information, concise analysis, main conclusions/recommendations, and financial implications.
2. Introduction: Introduce this portion of the paper (one paragraph).
3. Analysis
4. Conclusion/Recommendations – need to include financial implications
5. References in proper APA format (there should also be in-text citations for each of the references listed in the reference page).
6. Appendices – charts, tables, additional information to support your main analysis, conclusions and recommendation.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** These sections cannot be done individually. The entire team needs to work together on the analysis. Then use the entire analysis to come to conclusions and recommendations as a team. Based upon these recommendations determine financial implications. Team members will be expected to communicate with each other in the Group Discussion Boards area in this virtual classroom. Please take advantage of the “file exchange” feature to share the areas of the project with your team members as they develop.

*Analysis: You should try to answer all of these questions.*

What industry is this firm in? Is this evolving?

What are some of the key factors driving this firm/project?

What specific things are happening in the healthcare industry that C-NET should be concerned with?

What are some of the key dynamics driving C-NET's business?

How are the demographics of the industry changing? What are the demographics of the people taking the tests now and in the future?

What are the specific hospital needs and how are they changing?

Who are the major competitors to C-NET and possible expansion?

What kinds of competitive forces are industry members facing?

What are the key factors necessary for future success for C-NET?

What Industry conferences, classes and events should C-NET consider going to and why? (They attend ATP – Association of Test Publishers and ICE – Institute for Credentials Excellence)

Where should C-NET look to find best practices in the field and what are the best practices?

Are there specific test credentials needed for the test development industry?

How can C-NET reach out to new Specialty Boards and where are the Boards located?

## **Additional Industry Analysis Needed**

**Conduct a SWOT Analysis** - A *SWOT analysis* is a planning tool used to understand the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats involved in a project or in a business. It involves specifying the objective of the business or project and identifying the internal and external factors that are supportive or unfavorable to achieving that objective. The process generates information that is helpful in matching an organization or group's goals, programs, and capacities to the social environment in which it operates.

**Strengths** - Positive tangible and intangible attributes, internal to an organization. The organization is in control of these factors

**Weakness** - Factors that are within an organization's control that detract from its ability to attain the desired goal. Which areas might the organization improve?

**Opportunities** - External attractive factors that represent the reason for an organization to exist and develop. What opportunities exist in the environment, which will propel the organization?

**Threats** - External factors, beyond an organization's control, which could place the organization mission or operation at risk. The organization may benefit by having contingency plans to address them if they should occur. Classify them by their "seriousness" and "probability of occurrence".

**Evaluate Porter's Five Forces Model as it relates to C-NET** – this model is an analysis tool that uses five industry forces to determine the intensity of competition in an industry and its profitability level. These forces determine an industry structure and the level of competition in that industry.

**Threat of new entrants.** This force determines how easy (or not) it is to enter a specialized industry. If an industry is profitable and there are few barriers to enter, rivalry soon intensifies. When more organizations compete for the same market share, profits start to fall.

**Bargaining power of suppliers.** Strong bargaining power allows suppliers to sell higher priced or low-quality materials to their buyers. This directly affects the buying firms' profits because it must pay more for materials.

**Bargaining power of buyers.** Buyers have the power to demand lower price or higher product quality from industry producers when their bargaining power is strong. Lower price means lower revenues for the producer, while higher quality products usually raise production costs.

**Threat of substitutes.** This force is especially threatening when buyers can easily find substitute products with attractive prices or better quality and when buyers can switch from one product or service to another with little cost. For example, to switch from coffee to tea doesn't cost much.

**Rivalry among existing competitors.** This force is the major determinant on how competitive and profitable an industry is. In a competitive industry, firms must compete aggressively for a market share, which results in low profits.

***Recommendations:***

Based on the above industry analysis we recommend implementing the following initiatives. Please explain why. If you have actions you are not recommending, you may also state them and explain why. Be sure to consider the financial implications of your decisions. **DO NOT** just answer these questions and conduct analyses. The finished product needs to be a cohesive analysis of the industry.

### III. Competitive Analysis – Large vs. Small Competitors

#### *Background to This Section:*

Competitive analysis involves identifying competitors and evaluating their strategies to determine their strengths and weaknesses relative to a company's own product or service. A competitive analysis is a critical part of a company's strategic planning. With this evaluation, you can establish what makes your product or service unique and therefore what attributes you emphasize in order to attract your target market.

This portion of the paper should contain:

1. Abstract: (written after the entire section is completed): It usually contains a brief statement of the problem or proposal covered in the major document(s), background information, concise analysis, main conclusions/recommendations, and financial implications.
2. Introduction: Introduce this portion of the paper (one paragraph).
3. Analysis
4. Recommendations – need to include financial implications
5. References in proper APA format (there should also be in-text citations for each of the references listed in the reference page).
6. Appendices – charts, tables, additional information to support your main analysis, conclusions and recommendation.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** These sections cannot be done individually. The entire team needs to work together on the analysis. Then use the entire analysis to come to conclusions and recommendations as a team. Based upon these recommendations determine financial implications. Team members will be expected to communicate with each other in the Group Discussion Boards area in this virtual classroom. Please take advantage of the “file exchange” feature to share the areas of the project with your team members as they develop.

For this section of the paper, competition should be broken up into two sections. **Small competitors** and **large competitors** (Pearson, Bonent, Prometric, etc.).

*Analysis: Answer these questions for both large and small competitors, if applicable.*

In general, what is meant by a competitive analysis?

Who are the direct competitors in the field specialty test development and certification for nurses?

Who are the indirect competitors to C-NET and why are they indirect?

Who are the direct competitors in the field of competency testing for nurses?

What products and services do each of these competitors sell? What value do they offer?

What are the competitors past and current strategies?

What strategies can C-NET use to raise their profile nationally?

What are the competitors strengths and weaknesses?

What threats do the competitors pose?

How are the competition's strategy different than C-NET?

What are the differences in competitor's resources, capabilities and competencies vs. C-NET and how does that create a competitive advantage or not? What specific tools are used, if any?



What is each competitor's estimated market share? How does C-NET compare?  
How do these competitors market their company and products?  
Do the competitors have a web and social media presence and how does it compare to C-NET  
What potential opportunities do their weaknesses create for you?  
What can be done to raise the profile and awareness of C-NET?  
What related entities in the field of test development, administration or certification can C-NET look to partner with in the future and why? They already partner with PSI who administers all C-NET tests.  
How does understanding the competition help C-NET plan for the future?  
What benefits can C-NET derive from using this analysis?  
How does the competitive analysis fit into the strategic plan?

**Recommendations:**

Based on the above competitive analysis we recommend implementing the following initiatives. Please explain why. If you have actions you are not recommending, you may also state them and explain why. Be sure to consider the financial implications of your decisions. **DO NOT** just answer these questions –these are sample questions to consider. You may have other questions also. This section should carefully consider the entire competitive environment.

## **IV. Product Analysis/Development – Viability of Competency-Based Testing**

### ***Background to This Section:***

Product development, also called new product management, is a series of steps that includes the conceptualization, design, development and marketing of newly created or newly rebranded goods or services. The objective of product development is to cultivate, maintain and increase a company's market share by satisfying a consumer demand. In this case the new product will relate to the viability of competency-based testing. Currently, C-NET has four competency-based tests for nurse educators in its Clinical Judgment Series. Care of Children, Care of Older Adults, Basic Nurse Assistant and Essentials of Medication Administration. The first three tests are no longer used and are outdated. You should assess the viability of updating these tests and research what demand exists for them in the current and future market. The fourth test is currently being sold, but in very small volume and has not been updated recently. You should evaluate what it would take to update this test, what the demand is and what should be done to sell more. You should also research other competency-based nursing tests that are being used to see if they can be developed and sold for C-NET.

This portion of the paper should contain:

1. Abstract: (written after the entire section is completed): It usually contains a brief statement of the problem or proposal covered in the major document(s), background information, concise analysis, main conclusions/recommendations, and financial implications.
2. Introduction: Introduce this portion of the paper (one paragraph).
3. Analysis
4. Recommendations – need to include financial implications
5. References in proper APA format (there should also be in-text citations for each of the references listed in the reference page).
6. Appendices – charts, tables, additional information to support your main analysis, conclusions and recommendation.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** These sections cannot be done individually. The entire team needs to work together on the analysis. Then use the entire analysis to come to conclusions and recommendations as a team and based upon these recommendations determine financial implications. Team members will be expected to communicate with each other in the Group Discussion Boards area in this virtual classroom. Please take advantage of the “file exchange” feature to share the areas of the project with your team members as they develop.

### ***Analysis:***

In general, what is Product Analysis/Development and what key factors must be considered?  
Why is understanding the product and its development important to the firm?  
What factors of Product Analysis affect the decision to move forward on its development?  
What can the client do to understand this decision better?  
What do you think of the current state of each of the four competency tests C-Net currently has?  
How can you improve demand for these current tests? What can be done to improve them so that C-NET can compete in these markets again?  
What hospitals are currently using them and what hospitals may consider using them?  
How have competency tests changed over the last 5 years and how will they change in the future?  
What are some new competency-based tests C-NET may be able to develop and why?  
Can C-NET design a test like the TEAS academic skills test?  
How would you market any of these tests?  
How can this firm use Product Analysis/Development to effectively introduce new competency-based tests?  
In what ways can the firm leverage its unique assets to develop new competency-based tests to service hospitals and nurses?  
What additional benefits are derived from doing this analysis?  
What competition exists and what competitive advantages do they have over C-NET?

### ***Recommendations:***

Based on the above product/analysis development we recommend implementing the following initiatives. Please explain why. If you have actions you are not recommending, you may also state them and explain why. Be sure to consider the financial implications of your decisions. **DO NOT** just answer these questions –these are sample questions to consider. This section should clearly identify which factors were important when determining the usefulness of the current tests, how they can be improved, what the demand is for them, who currently uses them and what new products may C-Net consider developing.

## **V. Market Analysis – Marketing Initiatives/Plan for Competency-Based Testing**

### ***Background to This Section:***

A market analysis studies the attractiveness and the dynamics of a special market within a special industry. It is used to inform the company about the potential demand for a current or new product and is based on the study of the factors in the market. In this case, you will do a market analysis for competency-based testing for nurses. This is a subsection of the industry C-NET is in and can develop into a profitable market. Currently, C-NET has four competency-based tests for nurse educators in its Clinical Judgment Series. Care of Children, Care of Older Adults, Basic Nurse Assistant and Essentials of Medication Administration. The first three tests are no longer used and are outdated. The fourth test is currently being sold, but in very small volume and has not been updated recently. Your task is to evaluate the market for these products, see who uses them (hospitals, nurses), and evaluate their usefulness. Then develop a plan for C-NET to market these tools. You can look at other competency-based nursing tests that are being used to see if they can be developed and sold for C-NET.

This portion of the paper should contain:

1. Abstract: (written after the entire section is completed): It usually contains a brief statement of the problem or proposal covered in the major document(s), background information, concise analysis, main conclusions/recommendations, and financial implications.
2. Introduction: Introduce this portion of the paper (one paragraph).
3. Analysis
4. Recommendations – need to include financial implications
5. References in proper APA format (there should also be in-text citations for each of the references listed in the reference page).
6. Appendices – charts, tables, additional information to support your main analysis, conclusions and recommendation.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** These sections cannot be done individually. The entire team needs to work together on the analysis. Then use the entire analysis to come to conclusions and recommendations as a team and based upon these recommendations determine financial implications. Team members will be expected to communicate with each other in the Group Discussion Boards area in this virtual classroom. Please take advantage of the “file exchange” feature to share the areas of the project with your team members as they develop.

### ***Analysis:***

In general, what is a Marketing Plan and what are Marketing Initiatives?

Why is understanding a Marketing Plan and Marketing Initiatives important to the firm?

What marketing activities are currently necessary to launch this project?

How is the company's Mission represented in the development of this project?

How can they present this project most effectively in their messaging?

In what ways can the firm connect with its various applicants and hospitals through this project?

How can C-NET attract new customers and raise awareness of their product/brand through this initiative?

How can their marketing activities relate more closely to current economic and market conditions?

How can they leverage their social action and community service activities to enhance their public image?

What social media strategies would you recommend for C-NET?

What hospitals would you recommend targeting these tests to?

What tests are hospitals currently using? Which hospitals would you target and why?

What websites exist for these types of competency-based tests?

Conduct analysis to determine appropriate marketing activities necessary to launch this project. Use the 4 P's as your guideline.

**Product** - The goods and/or services offered by a company to its customers.

**Place** (distribution) - The activities that make the product available to consumers.

**Price** - The amount of money paid by customers to purchase the product.

**Promotion** -the activities that communicate the product's features and benefits and persuade customers to purchase the product.

Develop a marketing plan for the launch of Competency-Based Testing based on the responses to all the questions you have answered and your analysis.

### ***Recommendations:***

Based on the above market analysis we recommend implementing the following initiatives. Please explain why. If you have actions you are not recommending, you may also state them and explain why. Be sure to consider the financial implications of your decisions. **DO NOT** just answer these questions –these are sample questions to consider. The finished product needs to be a cohesive analysis of the marketing initiatives and plan necessary to succeed.