



2009 Change to Conjunctive Scoring by Del Hammond, Testing Specialist

Background

In order to pass previous WREB dental exams, candidates were required to obtain an overall score of 75 (a compensatory score where all section scores are combined into one overall score). In addition to the 75 points overall, candidates were also required to earn at least 55% of the points available in each section (a conjunctive requirement). Some state dental boards and testing agencies have a conjunctive requirement that requires candidates to score 75% in each section. A problem existed when candidates who tested with WREB wanted to license in a state that has a conjunctive 75% licensing standard.

Intended Results of This Change

The intent of this change was to convert WREB's scoring to a conjunctive requirement for each section of the exam, while maintaining WREB's requirement to identify competent and incompetent practitioners for licensing agencies. This change included the revision of WREB scoring, so that the passing standard on WREB testing could be better understood by state dental boards and other testing agencies. These changes were intended to facilitate state dental boards' acceptance of WREB scores for candidate licensure, to promote fair treatment of candidates, and to improve candidate mobility, allowing dentists to practice in more locations.

Scoring Changes

Analyses of WREB testing have shown that WREB's section score reliability is sufficient to allow WREB to discontinue compensatory scoring and use conjunctive section scores. The final scores for each rated section are scores ranging from 1 to 5. A score of 3 is the passing standard. It should be noted that Standard 14.17 in the 1999 *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing*, copyrighted by the American Educational Research Association, the American Psychological Association, and the National Council on Measurement in Education, states that "The cut score should be determined by careful analysis and judgment of acceptable performance." Consequently, rather than using a percentage for the cut score (passing level), WREB subcommittees have developed scoring rubrics so that an examiner rating of 3 represents the committee criteria for passing work by candidates. A rating, for items that are scored by examiners, is made by each of three examiners. The median of the three ratings is used when determining the section scores. It should be noted that penalty score reductions have also been reduced to align with the new score reporting. The point assignments, for each scored procedure, are published and allow the final results to be presented as a scale level, with the "3" level being the passing standard. The "3" criteria detail the lowest level of performance that represents competent practice.

The Periodontal and Prosthodontics sections include computer scored components and have 100 points for each of the sections. The passing standard is 75 %. The different forms of the computerized sections are score equated, so that a 75 represents the same passing level of performance for each form. Consequently, the score of 75% is not necessarily 75 % of the number of test questions. These passing standards are consistent with Standard 14.7, referenced above.

For additional scoring details, please refer to the Dental Candidate Guide.