

New Conjunctive Scoring

There are two primary scoring mechanisms for exams: compensatory and conjunctive. Both methods have advantages and disadvantages. Which method is most appropriate? This varies among exams, depending on many factors. WREB has historically chosen the compensatory scoring method due to the higher reliability it provides. Either model is capable of insuring competency in each area, but it is more obvious in the conjunctive model.

WREB has long considered moving to a conjunctive exam. Recent psychometric reviews of our examination indicate that the exam section reliability on the WREB exam is sufficiently high to allow a conjunctive exam without a significant decrease in reliability. Therefore, we are implementing a conjunctive scoring system for the Dental exam in 2009. The purpose of doing so is to increase the confidence of state boards that WREB candidates have shown competency in all tested areas of dentistry. This will increase mobility by allowing more states to accept WREB results.

Many hours have been spent by experts and examiners in revising the criteria and scoring system to accommodate a conjunctive scoring system without decreasing reliability (incorrectly identifying competent and incompetent candidates). The same procedures will be tested. The same performance levels are desired. The only significant change is that candidates will now be required to score the equivalent of 75% in every section. Criteria has been adjusted to correspond to the new scoring scale. The five sections are: Operative (2 procedures), Endodontics (2 teeth), Periodontics (Assessment and Treatment), Prosthodontics, and Patient Assessment and Treatment Planning. All five sections must be taken on the first attempt. Failure of 1-2 sections allows the candidate to retake just the failed sections. Failure of 3 or more sections requires retaking the entire examination. This change should have very little effect on how candidates perform on the exam. Grading is done on a scale of 5-1, with 5 being the highest level of performance. Three is the equivalent of 75% and the minimum passing score.

We send a heartfelt thank you to the many individuals who worked long and hard to facilitate this change. We anticipate that the examiners will appreciate the effort to streamline the grading criteria. And we look forward to providing candidates with an exam that should meet the requirements of all state boards.

For more information, please view [2009 Change to Conjunctive Scoring](#).