

Between the Test and the Score

What happens after you complete your exam? Let's take a look at some things that NBEO does to ensure the fairness and accuracy of every testing session after candidates complete an examination!

After candidates complete an examination, NBEO undergoes multiple processes designed to ensure fairness and accuracy. NBEO provides protection for candidates against any unfair scoring by reviewing candidate critiques. During the examination, candidates are provided a field into which they may write critiques of exam item(s). These critiques might denote changes in the profession that exam developers have not yet incorporated. After each exam administration, NBEO collects all candidate critiques for review. The critiques are reviewed internally by NBEO staff and then by the corresponding examination's Council, which is comprised of subject matter experts. After review and discussion, the Council may find that candidates' critiques are valid. When this happens, the Council may vote to remove an item from scoring. This process protects candidates from being unfairly scored on items that are found to have valid critiques. The process of reviewing and discussing candidate critiques is lengthy; however, the NBEO believes that ensuring that candidates are scored fairly is more important than providing scores more quickly.

Additionally, at the conclusion of each Part I and II exam administration, NBEO equates the exam forms. Parts I and II are administered using different exam forms. That is, the questions you see will be different from the questions another candidate sitting beside you is seeing. Because there are different exam forms that contain different questions, it is very important that NBEO ensure every candidate has an equally difficult examination; if we did not, then some candidates could unfairly receive an "easier" version of the test. Equating is a statistical process that sets all exam forms at an equal level of difficulty. If you haven't heard of equating before, you may be surprised to learn that most standardized tests are equated. Equating is part of the normal process of administering most standardized examinations.

Lastly, after an examination is administered, NBEO conducts forensic analysis of responses. NBEO utilizes embedded items that enable us to detect numerous forms of cheating. We conduct forensic analyses to ensure that your score is fair and valid. If cheating is undetected, regulatory licensing boards may be less able to rely on exam scores to determine initial licensure.

In addition to the internal and external quality control processes described above, NBEO validates its statistical processes with independent psychometricians to assure fairness and accuracy.

In sum, quite a lot happens between when you complete an examination and when you receive your score report. We understand how hard candidates work and prepare for exams, and we have put into place numerous post-examination processes to ensure fairness and accuracy in scoring.