



Questions and Answers from the FSBPT Webinar: “COVID-19 and the Impact on the Physical Therapy Community”

We received several questions we did not have time to address. We have included these questions below. Some questions have been edited for clarity or to remove redundancy.

If students cannot get a seat in an appropriate test location (based on distance) and they cannot afford to pay for a hotel due to not being able to work secondary to COVID-19, do they have an option to test later at a site closer to home? In looking at test seat availability before using window seats, how much travel is realistic to look for that availability before determining a window seat is a viable option?

To address the anticipated reduced capacity at Prometric Testing Centers for the July examinations, FSBPT added a three-week window for the PTA exam and a four-week window for the PT exam that follows the published exam date. Candidates are expected to test on the fixed date unless there are no appointments available within a reasonable distance.

Reasonable distance will depend on the candidate’s personal circumstances, such as where the individual lives and where there are test centers. Students should use their best professional judgment when determining if an available appointment is NOT within a reasonable distance.

How do candidates register for a seat in a center within the testing window if that becomes necessary?

All Authorization to Test (ATT) letters have been updated to include the entire testing window so that candidates can schedule an appointment with Prometric.

For students yet to receive their ATTs for July, will the ATT cover both the fixed date and the window? Will Prometric centers not allow scheduling within the window if there are still fixed date openings available?

Any newly issued ATT for July will cover both the fixed date and the window. Although candidates will not be prevented from scheduling in the window if there is availability on the fixed dates, candidates are

expected to test on the fixed date unless there are no appointments available within a reasonable distance.

When will Prometric notify students if their test date is changed? For example, if Prometric is allowing too many people to register for an exam and have to cancel some due to social distancing requirements, when will students be notified? Additionally, can they schedule students while implementing social distancing requirements in order to limit rescheduling students?

Substantial remediation is being done behind the scenes by Prometric. Going forward, cancellations should be done at least forty-eight hours in advance of the scheduled appointment.

There are a number of factors that determine whether a specific test center is able to open. If any of those factors change, it can cause a closed center to open, or result in an open center needing to close.

When will FSBPT open future test dates if needed? With the cancellation of the April exam and the opening of the test date range in July, will there be enough seats for all applicants?

Registration for the July exam is currently open and we expect that capacity challenges at Prometric test centers will continue into July. For July 2020, we are blocking additional seats on the fixed dates (July 8 for PTA and July 28 & 29 for PT). In addition, we are including a multi-week exam window following the fixed dates.

There will be a three-week window for PTA (July 9 through July 26) and a four-week window for PT (July 30 through August 31). Candidates are expected to test on the fixed date unless there are no appointments available within a reasonable distance.

FSBPT believes that with the additional blocked seats and the exam window, there should be enough seats for all applicants who want to test in July.

Has FSBPT considered opening the testing for the rest of the year to provide students with options to test close to home?

Although this was an option that was considered, we will not allow continuous testing for the rest of the year. FSBPT believes that the security concerns are far greater when we have continuous testing. We expect that the fixed dates and exam windows will allow ample appointment availability.

Are we considering the use of Proctor U so students/graduates can take the exam at home with a live proctor to assist with the backlog and moving forward?

No. Before we can consider changes to the NPTE program, we must think about the fundamental purpose of the NPTE: to help state physical therapy boards ensure that only those individuals with the requisite knowledge of physical therapy are licensed.

There are several challenges, including technical and logistical hurdles, to changing the NPTE program quickly.

- Stakeholder input
- Evidence base/data collection/piloting
- Fairness/access issues
- Security considerations
- Time to implement changes
- Practical considerations

If performance on the exam is lower than normal, would that be taken into consideration in grading?

The cut score for the NPTE is criterion referenced, not normative referenced. As a result, the cut score is set to ensure that any candidate that has the required entry-level knowledge should pass. The passing score is not based on how a candidate performs compared to the other individuals testing at the same time.

Although we appreciate the concern that candidates are experiencing even more stressful circumstances than normal, FSBPT is not reconsidering the NPTE cut score. Changing the cut score cannot be accomplished without gathering significant input from our stakeholders, legal review, and communication to those impacted.

What is your timeline for deciding about adding windows to the October fixed test dates?

Registration for the October fixed dates is currently open. Similar to July, we will have a large block of seats reserved for NPTE candidates on these fixed dates (October 6 for PTA and October 27 for PT).

FSBPT will need additional information before making any decisions regarding a testing window in October. These include Prometric’s capacity, candidate behavior, and the status of the pandemic.

If our graduation date changed, do we need to notify FSBPT?

Unless your graduation date will be delayed more than ninety days, there should be no impact on when you can validate the graduation for your cohort. FSBPT’s system allows schools to validate graduation up to 150 days before graduation. In addition, the NPTE Policies allow students to sit for the NPTE up to ninety days before graduation. Please note, even if your state allows students to sit for the test more than ninety days before graduation, the FSBPT policy is still ninety days before graduation.

For the purposes of calculating the ninety and 150 days, FSBPT uses the following standard: the student has completed the program (both didactic and clinical) and is eligible for graduation, versus the degree conferral date, which can be significantly after the student actually completes all program requirements.

If you have any specific questions about your cohort, please email schools@fsbpt.org.

Do candidates need to provide their own PPE or will the testing center supply PPE? Are there minimal standards for the type of mask or other PPE that a candidate should wear during the exam? Will students have to wear a mask if they have a medical excuse? What paperwork will be required?

All candidates will be required to bring and wear a mask during the entirety of their time at the Prometric test center. Both medical masks or cloth face coverings are acceptable. Any test taker who comes to the test center without a mask will not be allowed to test and will NOT be eligible for a free reschedule.

Any candidate unable to wear a mask for a medical reason should request a testing accommodation.

Has FSBPT considered extending students' access to the Academic PEAT since many students will be taking the NPTE later? I am referring to taking the second exam, not accessing results.

Yes, FSBPT will extend Academic PEAT if the class has not completed the second form. Extension requests can be sent to PEAT@fsbpt.org.

What would a candidate do if they took the exam pre-graduation and then another unexpected delay occurs and they do not graduate as expected? Will the scores just be held until they ultimately are able to graduate? If a candidate passed the exam but took longer than ninety days to graduate, do they just need to wait until they graduate and then they will get their license? Are there any additional fees/specific processes/forms?

Once an individual passes the NPTE, they retain that passing score, even if there is a delay in program completion. Since passing the NPTE is only one component of eligibility for a license, any delays in program completion would cause a delay in the ability to become licensed.

Is there a list of states participating in the AAP on the FSBPT website?

The [slides from the May 15 webinar](#) include a map identifying the eighteen states that are participating in the AAP process as of May 2020. These states include: Alabama, Colorado, Georgia, Iowa, Maine, Michigan, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, North Dakota, Ohio, Oregon, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Texas, Utah, Washington, and Wisconsin.

Is FSBPT involved in discussions about provisional licensure? Can a student ask for a temporary license in a state if they already took the NPTE in another state?

Although the FSBPT [Model Practice Act \(MPA\)](#) doesn't include language on temporary licensure, there are twenty-nine states that have temporary licensure for graduates of CAPTE accredited programs testing for the first time. The FSBPT [Licensure Reference Guide](#) can help identify these states.

What data can programs send you to help inform you on your decisions?

There is no specific data that you need to send. What is most helpful, however, would be to make sure you create your cohorts in a timely fashion and validate graduation when appropriate. This will help FSBPT plan for the expected number of candidates that still need to test in 2020.

I am in a state that does not participate in AAP and does not allow testing before graduation. Since graduation is delayed due to COVID, what options do these students have for scheduling a July exam?

Unfortunately, if the student is planning on getting licensed in a non-AAP state, their options are limited. They might consider looking at licensure in a state that allows for testing prior to graduation and then apply for a license via endorsement in their desired state. The FSBPT [Licensure Reference Guide](#) can help identify these states.

Will the deadline date for approval from jurisdictions be extended for the July testing date?

No. The deadlines for the July exams will not be extended. For the July 28 & 29 PT exam, candidates must register and pay by June 24 and jurisdictions must make candidates eligible by July 1.

For the July 8 PTA exam, candidates must register and pay by June 3 and jurisdictions must make candidates eligible by June 10.

Do you anticipate that future set dates (beginning October 2020) will be overbooked? Should our December 2020 graduates be warned that it might be hard to get a seat in Jan 2021?

FSBPT believes that with the large block of seats reserved for NPTE candidates for October, there should be enough seats for all applicants wanting to test in October. As a result, we are not expecting that candidates seeking to test in October will be required to wait until January 2021.

FSBPT will need additional information before making any decisions regarding a testing window in October. These include Prometric's capacity, candidate behavior, and the status of the pandemic.

Are you going to update the reports more often with the window of test dates?

School report data will be updated once after the testing window is completed.

For candidates testing in the April and July testing windows, NPTE scores will be reported on a weekly basis. Scores will be released approximately five days after the last date in that week's window, and the free score report will be available for thirty days one week after the score release date.