Performance Feedback Report Frequently Asked Questions

Total Scores

Q: The highest score in the Retake Range is above 600. Does that mean if I had taken a different form of the examination, I should have passed?
A: Based on the score you earned, we are able to estimate a range of scores that is likely to include your average score if you had taken every other form of the exam on the same day. Although each form is equal in terms of difficulty

Your score is influenced by many factors other than your knowledge of the material. You might have guessed on several items and gotten the correct answer, which would make your score higher than it normally would be. Or maybe you had a bad day and your score was lower than it otherwise would have been. Based on a single score, it is not possible to determine if you would have passed if you had taken a different form. The Retake Range estimates the range of scores you could expect if you had taken a different form of the examination on the same day and if you prepared in exactly the same way as you did for the original examination. About two-thirds (64%) of examinees have an average score within the Retake Range we report.

We cannot assume that your next score will be at the high end of the Retake Range. Doing so would be lowering the cut score. However, you can use the Retake Range to see how far from passing you are and to help make decisions about how to prepare to take the NPTE again.

Q: How do I determine the cut score for the exam I took?
A: FSBPT does not disclose the cut scores for specific examination forms to the public. If you want to know an approximate cut score for the form you took, you can add together the "On Track to Pass" scores for each Content Area. If you get this score, you will definitely pass.

Q: The test seemed easy, but I still failed. Why is that?
A: A test form of the NPTE might seem more difficult than other forms you have taken, or it might seem easier. There are no "trick questions" on the NPTE, but an item might not be as easy or as difficult as it seems. Some items seem easy, but you may have missed an important fact, or the item might test whether you can recognize a common mistake. Other items may seem hard, but when you think them through, you are able to come to the correct answer. You may not be familiar with an item's content, but by applying your knowledge of physical therapy, you can get the item right. Overall, each form of the NPTE is equal in difficulty.

Q: How do I know which questions are unscored?
A: Unscored pretest questions are included on the examination to determine if they meet FSBPT's rigorous statistical standards. Unscored questions are distributed randomly throughout the test and are not identified. If they were, examinees might skip them or might not put as much effort into answering them as they would for questions that count toward their score. Examinees' sincere effort to answer the pretest questions as though they were being scored is needed for meaningful statistical analysis of the pretest questions' performance.

Q: Why don't the pretest questions count toward my total score?
A: Including these questions in your score would delay score reporting by weeks and would not likely change the result of your examination.

Scores by Content Area and Body System

Q: Can I combine content area scores or body systems scores from previous administrations to pass the examination?
A: You cannot combine scores from different administrations to create a passing score. The number of questions in any given content area is too few to determine your ability in that area with much precision. So you could score above 600 in an area due to being asked questions that you know well (by chance) rather than a complete representation of your knowledge in that area.

Q: Why can't I pass each content area or body system one at a time?
A: In some professions, candidates for licensure are allowed to pass the licensure examination one section at a time. Most of these examinations are administered over more than one day, and the option to pass by section is offered to examinees for administrative efficiency. Since the NPTE can be taken in one sitting, there is no need to allow examinees to pass by section. Examinations that allow examinees to pass by section are uncommon in the health care professions.

Q: My percentage correct was higher in one area, but the scale score for that area was lower than for other areas. How is that possible?
A: The questions in each area vary in difficulty. If the questions in one area are very difficult, it is possible to get a higher scale score in that area without answering a high percentage of questions correctly. The opposite is also true. If the questions in an area are easy, you will have to get a high percentage correct in order to get the same scale score.

Scores by Section

Q: Why aren't there Scale Scores or Retake Ranges for the Scores by Section?
A: Section scores are should not be considered as reliable an indicator of your knowledge as your total score or scores by content areas and body system. There isn't as much value in precise information for Scores by Section. Since each section of the examination includes several content areas, information on sections will not help you to narrow your studying to specific content areas.

Q: I didn't see any pattern in the scores by content area or body system, but my score on one section was very low. How can I improve that?
A: Several things can cause a low section score. It might be that the questions in that section were hard for you, and it was just a random occurrence. Another possibility is that your mind wandered or you lost concentration during that section. If you think this is the case, make sure you do what you can to keep your energy level up throughout the examination. Make sure you get a normal amount of sleep the night before. Make sure you eat a nutritious meal before the testing session but not so much that you will be fatigued. If you drink caffeine, make sure you don't drink too much, as that could interfere with your concentration or cause you to "crash" during the test. If you have any flexibility in scheduling your examination, schedule it during a time when you will be at peak alertness. Although the testing day is a big day for everyone, it is important to treat it like any other day as much as possible, so that your performance is not affected by a big change in your routine.

Stress can also interfere with your ability to concentrate. Studying strategically will reduce your stress. Make a reasonable study schedule, and stick to it. Practice meditation or relaxation techniques that will help you focus your mind. Take practice questions under exam-like circumstances, in a quiet place like a library, and time yourself with limited breaks. These strategies will help you better prepare for the examination.

Lastly, if you find your mind wandering during the examination, use the strikeout feature or your dry-erase board to help you work through questions. Doing this might help you get your focus back.

Q: Why do the numbers of questions change from section to section? Why doesn't each section include 50 questions, like in the actual examination sections?
A: The number of items per section changes because unscored pretest items are distributed randomly throughout the examination. Each section contains roughly the same number of scored items, but that might vary by one or two items per section.

<u>Content Outlines & Example Questions</u>
Q: Why can't I get questions and answers from my actual examination form?
A: For test security purposes, we cannot release items from a particular test form until long after the test administration. To prepare to retake the examination, it is better to focus your studying on the broad areas where you want to improve your performance. The Performance Feedback Report shows examples of items from each area of the examination so that you can have a reference for what those items look like. You could also use FSBPT's Practice Exam and Assessment Tool (PEAT) to get a better idea of the kinds of questions that relate to particular content areas or body systems.

Q: Does the content outline change from examination form to examination form?
A: FSBPT updates the content outlines periodically to keep pace with changes in practice and minimum competence requirements. These changes are usually announced about a year in advance in the "Exam Development" section of the FSBPT website. All forms administered within a calendar year are based on the same content outline.

Q: The NPTE seemed to include many items from one content area or body system. Why did my test form have so many of these items?
A: The content of each examination form is balanced by a committee of experts before it is administered. An examination form might seem to include many questions on a single topic because you spent a lot of time on those questions or because those questions were hard for you or concerned clinical scenarios you had not encountered before. Any of these factors might make a topic more memorable, and therefore it might seem that there are more items on that area on the examination. However, FSBPT takes great care to balance the content of each NPTE form.