

WHAT'S IN A SCORE? THE SCIENCE OF ASSESSMENT

Psychometrics is a statistical science of mental measurement. Psychometricians work to ensure that exams are fair for examinees and that scores are a valid reflection of the examinee's ability.

ABIM accomplishes this by holding itself to this rigorous multi-step assessment development process:

1. BLUEPRINTING

Practicing physicians are surveyed to determine what is relevant to practice. Then, the exam committee determines what content should appear on the exam.

2. ITEM DEVELOPMENT

*An iterative process where test questions are developed by content experts from the internal medicine community. Each test question undergoes **multiple rounds of qualitative review** before appearing on an exam.*

3. ITEM ANALYSIS

Statistically evaluate each question to ensure that the questions used to score examinees measure the appropriate skills and are statistically well-functioning.

4. FORM ASSEMBLY

*Build exam forms of **comparable content and difficulty**.*

5. EQUATING

*This process ensures that **examinees of the same ability will receive the same score** by accounting for any remaining differences in exam form difficulty.*

6. STANDARD SETTING

*Committees of volunteer board certified physicians make judgments about questions to **determine how many questions an examinee must answer correctly to pass an exam**, based on what they believe a physician must know to be certified by ABIM. Once the standard is set it stays constant for several years.*

7. SCORING

*The questions on each physician's exam are scored as correct or incorrect. The physician's score is compared to the predetermined passing score to determine the pass/fail decision. **Detailed score reports are created for each physician** with a score, pass/fail status, and feedback about strengths and weaknesses.*