

Scaled Scores Frequently Asked Questions

What is a scaled score?

A scaled score is a score that has been mathematically transformed from a raw score (i.e., the number of correct answers) to a standardized scale. For every possible raw score on a test form, there is a corresponding scaled score. This transformation is similar to converting from pounds to kilograms. The weight of the object has not changed, only the units being reported.

When multiple forms of a test are used, or when results are compared overtime, scaled scores are needed to adjust for possible differences in test form length or difficulty. This allows the reporting scale and the passing scaled score to remain the same for all test forms. Some examples of scaled ranges are displayed in the table below.

	Minimum Score	Maximum Score	Passing Score
Test A	200	800	500
Test B	100	600	450
Test C	300	1200	800

Why use scaled scores?

Scaled scores allow for direct comparisons of scores across different versions of the exam. While two test forms adhere to the same exam blueprint, they rarely are equal in difficulty. As a result, comparing the raw scores of candidates who took different forms would not be a fair representation of their knowledge or performance. Scaled scoring takes into account these differences in difficulty and reports all scores on the same standardized scale.

Why not report raw scores or percent correct?

Percent correct scores are just another version of raw scores and thus do not resolve the issue of the non-comparability of scores from different test forms. The best practice is to choose a scaled score that avoids confusion with the raw or percent correct score scales.

What is a passing score?

The passing score is the number of items candidates must answer correctly to pass the examination. The passing score is based on the results of a criterion-referenced process where a committee of subject matter experts discuss the minimum level of competency required to pass the examination during an established psychometric standard setting method, such as the Angoff method. This minimal level of competency is then maintained on future forms through a statistical process known as equating.

Do scaled scores change who passes or fails?

Scaled scores **DO NOT** affect individual candidate pass or fail decisions. The decision is always based on whether candidates answered the minimum number of questions correctly determined by the standard setting process or subsequent equating. The scaled passing score is reported as the same score regardless of the test form.