



Responses to questions asked during the PECT test development webinars held by the Evaluation Systems group of Pearson in May 2013

I. Field testing

How did you recruit field test participants?

Our field test recruitment efforts were designed to get the word out about PECT field testing to all eligible students. Notifications about field testing were sent to members of the Equity Assurance Committee and the Content Advisory Committees, Pennsylvania LEAs, deans, department chairs, and faculty at state-approved Pennsylvania teacher education programs. Over 1,000 field tests were taken.

Were field tests scored? What was the pass rate?

No, field tests were not scored. The primary purpose of field testing is to gather psychometric data on the performance of individual test items that may be used on future test forms. No "passing score" is associated with the field test forms.

II. Standard Setting

What is the "hypothetical group of candidates" that was used as a reference during standard setting activities?

In setting standards for a licensure test, participants are instructed to focus on a hypothetical group of candidates who are just at the level of knowledge and skills to be an effective novice teacher (for the PreK–4 and Special Education tests) or at the level of basic skills knowledge required for admission into an approved Pennsylvania teacher education program (for the Pre-service Academic Performance Assessment [PAPA]). Using a hypothetical reference group of candidates is a widely accepted technique for setting passing standards in a number of professional fields, including education. The procedure used is referred to as the Modified Angoff method.

During the simulated test-taking portion of the standard setting meetings, did the panelists take the test on computer or on paper?

Panelists received a demonstration of the computer-based testing environment and completed their review of the questions using a paper-based form.

Who sat on the standard setting panels? Were the panelists classroom teachers or teacher educators? Were any Liberal Arts faculty recruited?

The panel consisted of both teacher educators from educator preparation institutions involved in classes that might be taken by potential teachers, and public school classroom teachers.

Was outcome data from previously used assessments factored in when setting the standards for the PAPA?

No, panelists considered only the PAPA modules during the standard setting procedure.

What data are provided to standard setting panelists?

Standard setting panelists receive round one rating summaries that include individual item level ratings, a distribution of individual item ratings, and median group ratings for each item. Panelists also receive item difficulty data from the field test.

When will you look at the cutscores again?

This is a policy decision that can only be made by the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE).

III. Standards Used to Create the Tests

What standards were used to create the tests?

PAPA test objectives were based on the *Pennsylvania Academic Standards*, the *Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects*, and the *Common Core State Standards for Mathematics*.

PreK–4 and Special Education test objectives were based on the *Pennsylvania Program Framework Guidelines (including Accommodations and Adaptations for Diverse Learners in Inclusive Settings and English Language Learners)*, the *Pennsylvania Early Childhood Education Standards*, and other documents deemed appropriate by the PDE.

How is the validity of the PAPA established?

The PAPA test objectives were developed based on the *Pennsylvania Academic Standards* and other documents deemed appropriate by the PDE. The test objectives were reviewed, revised, and approved by the PAPA Equity Assurance Panel and the PAPA Content Advisory Committee. These committees consisted of Pennsylvania educator preparation program faculty and Pennsylvania public school educators. All test items were reviewed and approved by Pennsylvania educators, who also participated in setting the passing standards.

IV. Test Administration and Test Weighting

How do you explain to students and their parents the sudden shift in pass rates (compared to the previous test) on the PAPA?

The PAPA is a new and different test. The passing score was set by the PDE based on the recommendations of a standard setting panel of Pennsylvania educators.

How much weight is given to the sentence correction section in the Writing module of the PAPA?

There are two sentence correction questions. There are two errors to correct within each of the sentence correction questions; hence, the sentence correction questions are given the same weight as four selected-response questions.

How long must a candidate wait before retaking a test?

30 days.

Is there a limit on the number of test attempts?

No, there is no limit on the number of test attempts.

How early can college freshmen take the PAPA?

Typically, the PAPA should be taken as soon as possible once a student indicates interest in pursuing an instructional certificate program. The sooner the PAPA is taken, the more likely the student is to have time to remediate and retest, if necessary.

Who wrote the original questions for the tests?

Pearson employs a full-time staff of professional writers and test development specialists with the appropriate content area backgrounds and dedication to preparing valid and reliable assessment materials.

How much time is allotted for each of the PAPA modules?

Candidates can take all three modules (Reading, Writing, and Mathematics) during one three-hour test session, or they can take each module separately. If candidates take all three modules together they can allocate the total time (3 hours) across the three modules in any way they please.

If they register for each module separately, the following time limits apply:

Reading = 45 minutes

Mathematics = 60 minutes

Writing = 75 minutes

How much time is allotted for each of the PreK–4 modules?

Candidates can take all three modules during one test session lasting 3 hours and 15 minutes, or they can take each module separately. If candidates take all three modules together, they can allocate the total time (3 hours and 15 minutes) across the three modules in any way they please.

If they register for each module separately, the following time limits apply:

Module 1 = 45 minutes

Module 2 = 75 minutes

Module 3 = 75 minutes

Are calculators permitted on PAPA modules?

Yes, an online calculator is provided for the PAPA Mathematics module.

Are the test blueprints available to the public?

Yes, the test designs are available on the PECT website.

Is there a composite score option for the PECT PreK–4 test?

No, there is not a composite score option on the PreK–4 test. This is a standards-based test that is based on the *Pennsylvania Program Framework Guidelines*.

Why do you use scaled scores?

The use of a common scale (scaled scores) for all tests in the PECT program allows for consistency in score reporting across tests, test modules, and test administrations. Using scaled scores maintains the meaning of scores over time (i.e., a scaled score of 220 indicates that an examinee has met the performance criterion established for the test regardless of the test, test form, or test administration).

How many questions would a student need to answer correctly in order to achieve a scaled score of 220?

The raw score equivalents to the scaled passing score of 220 are not considered public information. The cutscore (raw passing score) for a test module represented by the scaled passing score of 220 may vary slightly across different test forms for that module, due to slight variations in test difficulty from one form to the next. Test form equating procedures are used to account for that difference. It would cause confusion if raw cutscores were made public, because of the possibility that the cutscore for a module could change due to test form equating. A scaled score of 220 represents the passing standard approved by the PDE for all PECT test forms.

Will Pearson be offering a free voucher for retesting?

Yes, the procedures and criteria for applying was provided to Pennsylvania educator preparation programs in July 2013.

Where can we find testing data for our students?

Each approved Pennsylvania educator preparation program has a designated score report contact. The score report contact at your institution has access to the *ResultsAnalyzerTM* reporting tool.

Are test scores valid indefinitely?

PAPA test scores are valid for 99 years. PECT test scores are valid for 10 years.