

Setting the passing score

The passing score for the exam is set by the Examination Committee using the Modified Angoff Method and the equating method.

The Modified Angoff Method is one of the most widely used and accepted methods for establishing the passing score in high-stakes exams. The Modified Angoff Method requires each Committee member to independently rate each question on the exam in terms of the “minimally competent applicant”. The minimally competent applicant can be described as the applicant possessing the minimum level of knowledge and skills necessary to practise competently, safely and ethically. To do the rating, the Committee members ask themselves “What percentage of minimally competent applicants will answer this question correctly?”

In addition to Committee members’ ratings, a variety of relevant data is carefully considered to ensure that the standard that applicants will be required to achieve is valid and fair. This can include information on the preparation of new graduates and statistical data for the individual exam questions. The ratings from all Committee members are then collated and tabulated to achieve the average rating per question. These ratings are then averaged to obtain the passing score for the total exam.

In some instances, additional statistical evidence, such as equating data, may be reviewed when establishing a passing score. Equating compares applicants’ performance on particular questions in one exam administration to the performance of those in previous administrations. The purpose of this is to gauge the relative difficulty of the current exam and the relative strength of the applicants. Understanding these differences helps ensure that the same standards are measured across applicants, regardless of the exam they write.

Marking

Answer sheets are electronically scanned and scored. It is very important that the answer sheets be filled out correctly. Only answers recorded on the answer sheet will be scanned and scored. Applicants will not receive any credit for questions that are answered in the test booklet but not on the answer sheet. No credit will be given where an applicant selects more than one answer to a single question.

Quality control reports and checks are done during and after marking to ensure accuracy. The answer sheets with scores very close to the pass mark are hand-scored to confirm the number of correct answers.

Results

Results are emailed four to six weeks after the exam.

The College reports the result as “pass” or “fail.” Applicants will not receive a percentage or numerical mark. As the number of exam questions may vary from one exam sitting to the next, the passing criteria are different for each exam.

An applicant who fails will receive a Candidate Performance Profile that describes performance in each of the categories defined in the Examination Blueprint. This profile provides information using scaled scores. The scaled score is a conversion of the raw score on the exam to a common measurement scale. The passing score is 450 on a scale ranging from a minimum of 100 to a maximum of 700. If the applicant’s score on this common scale is at or higher than the passing score, the applicant passes. If the candidate’s score is lower than the passing score, the applicant fails. It is the total score that determines whether the result is a “pass” or “fail.” A pass may be achieved even if an applicant has not passed in one of the categories.

The Candidate Performance Profile provides detailed information on the score, in content categories, based on two different classifications: (1) Competency Category (domain) and (2) Cognitive Level. Applicants can also see how they performed in comparison to the average performance of applicants who passed (the reference group) for each of the content categories of the Examination Blueprint.

Hand-scoring

Before the College releases results, a number of quality assurance checks are performed to ensure results are accurate. If an applicant fails, they may submit a written request for hand-scoring to the College within four weeks of receiving their results.

Applicants requesting hand-scoring must pay a fee of \$50 that will be refunded **only** if there is a change in score. The applicant’s original answer sheet will be hand-marked and the final result will be reported to the applicant by email within two weeks of making the request. No other reports will be received after the exam has been hand-scored.