



Common Questions about NBME® CBSSA Score Report Changes

For Examinees

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COMPREHENSIVE BASIC SCIENCE SELF-ASSESSMENT (CBSSA)

COMMON QUESTIONS

NBME's Medical School Services team explored how scores from our Comprehensive Basic Science Self-Assessments could best support your needs to gauge readiness for USMLE® Step 1, which moved to pass/fail reporting starting from January 26, 2022. Answers to commonly asked questions about the CBSSA score reporting transition implemented on February 23, 2022 are available below.

What was changed on the CBSSA score reports?

The overall, 3-digit score was replaced by an equated percent correct score that represents the percentage of content mastered. In addition, the report shows your estimated probability of passing if you take USMLE Step 1 within one week (i.e., with a similar level of knowledge as when you took CBSSAs). This estimated probability is calculated based on a large group of examinees who tested within one week of taking Step 1 for the first time.

For each content area, the new report includes an equated percent correct score and the average equated percent correct score for a Step 1 comparison group. The boxes indicating whether content area performance was lower, the same, or higher than one's overall performance was discontinued.

What did not change?

- There is still a histogram depicting overall performance. It shows the distribution of equated percent correct scores for a national cohort, with lines indicating your specific score and the low-pass range for Step 1, which corresponds to performance that is above but near the passing standard.
- All content areas are the same. The percentage of the test comprised by each content area continues to be reported.
- The boxes indicating whether performance was lower, average, or higher in relation to a Step 1 comparison group are still provided.

Providing an equated percent correct score for CBSSAs along with an estimated probability of passing Step 1 is a way to continue reporting a score while staying aligned with the Step 1 move to pass/fail. We heard from students that receiving an overall CBSSA score was important, and we selected equated percent correct scores based on the familiarity of the 0-100 scale. Like the previous 3-digit scores, equated percent correct scores can be used to track performance over time if you take CBSSAs more than once.

The new equated percent correct scores that are reported for each content area help to provide more detail about areas of strength and weakness, so you can plan your study time more effectively. The boxes that continue to be reported are designed to help you interpret your results as accurately as possible.

Does CBSSA still report a numeric score?

CBSSA provides an equated percent correct score that represents the percentage of content mastered. Equated percent correct scores are statistically adjusted to account for slight variations in exam form difficulty, so they can be used to track performance over time if you take CBSSA more than once. In addition, the CBSSA report provides your estimated probability of passing if you take Step 1 within one week (i.e., with a similar level of knowledge as when you took CBSSA).

Can I compare my equated percent correct scores to 3-digit scores?

You can compare your overall performance on CBSSA to a range representing low passing performance on Step 1. You can also compare your content area performance to the performance of a Step 1 comparison group based on content area equated percent correct scores (new) and boxes indicating whether your performance was statistically lower, about the same, or higher than the performance of the comparison group. The new score report helps you compare your score against others in the content

areas and you will get a more detailed view of your relative performance. A direct comparison of your previous 3-digit score to the new equated percent correct score scale is not possible due to the elimination of the 3-digit scores on Step 1.

What does equated mean?

Equating is a statistical procedure that adjusts scores for slight variations in exam form difficulty so all scores are comparable regardless of which exam form is taken.

What are the benefits of an equated percent correct score?

Equated percent correct scores tell you how much of the content you mastered using the familiar 0-100 scale so you can easily understand your performance, including areas of strength and weakness. The 3-digit scores did not provide this type of criterion-referenced information. Like the 3-digit scores, equated percent correct scores can be used to track performance over time if you take CBSSAs more than once.

How does equated percent correct differ from classic percent correct?

Equated percent correct scores are statistically adjusted to account for slight variations in exam form difficulty, so they can support more accurate comparisons than unadjusted percent correct scores.

Does the new CBSSA score report provide information on my readiness/likelihood of passing Step 1?

Yes, the new CBSSA score reports allow you to compare your score to a range representing low passing performance on Step 1 and also provide an estimated probability of passing Step 1 if testing within one week of your CBSSA attempt.

Does CBSSA score report provide longitudinal feedback? What is included on the longitudinal report?

Yes, CBSSA score report provides longitudinal feedback. The first page of the longitudinal report includes information on how to interpret the results and a table showing test dates, forms, and total equated percent correct scores for up to six CBSSAs taken on or after February 23, 2022. The following pages display score trajectories using line graphs, with a horizontal line indicating the average estimated performance of a national cohort of Step 1 first-takers from LCME-accredited medical schools on CBSSA.

Will CBSSAs taken prior to the release of longitudinal feedback be included on the report? For example, if I took a CBSSA on March 7, another on April 5, and another in May, will the two taken prior to the release be included on the longitudinal feedback report?

The longitudinal report will include any CBSSA taken on or after February 23, 2022.

Will examinees receive a longitudinal report even if they have only taken one CBSSA?

Yes. The graphs on their longitudinal report will show snapshot results for the one CBSSA taken.

Will institutions receive the longitudinal report if a student pays with a voucher?

Yes, if the student uses an institutionally provided voucher following purchases made with their own funds, then the school will see a longitudinal report with all previous results for CBSSAs taken on or after February 23, 2022.