



**Examination Report for 2017-2018 Testing Year
Board of Certification (BOC) Certification Examination for Athletic Trainers**

April 2018

INTRODUCTION

The Board of Certification, Inc., (BOC) is a non-profit credentialing agency that provides certification for the athletic training profession. The BOC was incorporated in 1989 to govern the certification program, which had then existed for nearly 20 years, for entry-level athletic trainers and recertification standards for athletic trainers. The entry-level certification program is designed to establish a common benchmark for entry into the athletic training profession. The BOC serves the public interest by developing, administering, and continually reviewing a certification process that reflects current standards of practice in athletic training.

Standard Setting and Equating of Examination Forms

In February 2011, a panel of 10 certified athletic trainers convened to establish the performance standard to be implemented for the PA6 test blueprint. The panel reviewed the scored items for forms 362(1) and 362(2) introduced in April 2011. The panel participated in three rounds of data collection and used a modified Angoff model, the Yes/No technique (Impara & Plake, 1997).

All later forms of the PA6 examinations are equated using the common-item non-equivalent groups design (Kolen & Brennan, 2004). This design is frequently used in practice because, unlike with other equating designs, there is no requirement that the group of candidates who have taken the new form be equal in ability to the group of candidates who have taken a previous form. Instead, a subset of “common” items is included on both the new and old (i.e., reference) forms. This set of common items provides the link that is used to statistically determine (1) which group of candidates is of higher ability and (2) whether the new form is easier or harder than the reference form. If the new form is found to be easier or more difficult than the reference form, then the appropriate adjustment to the cut score is made to ensure that the same passing standard is applied to all forms.

The protocol for equating new BOC forms is to equate newly developed examination forms to a reference form that has been used within the last two years.

The modified Angoff process was used to establish the performance standard for the PA7 test blueprint. In April 2017, a panel of 12 certified athletic trainers reviewed the scored items for forms PA701 and PA702. Some minor changes were made to the scored set of items on form PA702. When the forms were introduced in May 2017, the cut score for Form PA702 was equated to the standard set on Form PA701.

Score Reporting

Because examination forms are possibly of different difficulty, providing raw scores can be misleading. As a result, many programs, including the ACT® and SAT® examinations, use scaled scores. Scaled scores are particularly useful at providing the basis for meaningful long-term comparisons of results across different administrations of an examination.

Scaled scores are used because over the life of every testing program, situations arise in which changes in test length occur, a decision is made to assess more or fewer areas, the numbers of items that are scored versus unscored (experimental) changes, or different examination forms of different difficulty are being compared.

For scaled scores, the passing standard (number of items answered correctly) on any examination form is always reported as the same scaled score. The equated scores for the BOC certification examination are converted via linear transformation so that the passing standard for all test forms is reported to candidates as 500 on a scale of 200 to 800.

ANALYSIS OF THE CERTIFICATION EXAMINATION

Candidates Excluded from This Report

The report does not include, except where noted, candidates who were administered the BOC certification examination via paper and pencil (i.e., ADA candidates) or candidates with incomplete data. As a result, the number of candidates analyzed for this report might not match the number of candidates who sat for the BOC certification examination.

There are 5,371 administrations of the BOC certification examination included in this report, which represents a 0.9% increase from the 2016-2017 testing year (5,323). The number of first-time examinations decreased from 4,119 in 2016-2017 to 4,012 in 2017-2018, which represents a 2.6% decrease. Retake examinations increased from 1,204 to 1,357 in 2017-2018, a 12.7% increase.

Pass Rates

Table 1. Historical BOC Examination Counts and Pass Rates ¹

Year	First-time	Pass	% Pass	Retake	Pass	% Pass	All	Pass	% Pass
RD6									
2011-2012	3,222	2,653	82.3%	1,664	696	41.8%	4,886	3,269	66.9%
2012-2013	3,631	2,935	80.8%	1,319	507	38.4%	4,950	3,442	69.5%
2013-2014	3,679	3,048	82.8%	1,210	497	41.1%	4,889	3,545	72.5%
2014-2015	3,768	3,039	80.7%	1,283	466	36.3%	5,051	3,505	69.4%
2015-2016	4,059	3,357	82.7%	1,308	547	41.8%	5,367	3,904	72.7%
2016-2017	4,119	3,444	83.6%	1,204	465	38.6%	5,323	3,909	73.4%
2017-2018	2,406	2,149	89.3%	185	85	45.9%	2,591	2,234	86.2%
RD7									
2017-2018	1,606	1,091	67.9%	1,172	334	28.5%	2,780	1,426	51.3%

Table 2. Historical BOC Examination Scaled Score Summary Statistics

Cohort	N	Mean	Median	Std Dev	Min	Max
All 2017-18	5,369	536.9	538	71.3	275	743
First-time	4,012	557.8	560	65.1	304	743
Retake	1,357	475.0	478	49.9	275	665
All 2016-17	5,323	551.3	554	72.2	265	751
First-time	4,119	569.6	577	67.2	315	751
Retake	1,204	488.8	489	50.7	265	678
All 2015-16	5,367	543.5	544	67.5	217	729
First-time	4,059	561.2	564	62.8	356	729
Retake	1,308	488.6	489	49.9	217	661
All 2014-15	5,051	543.3	542	71.4	259	733
First-time	3,768	563.0	567	67.1	272	733
Retake	1,283	485.5	484	48.7	259	650
All 2013-14	4,889	529.7	536	57.1	272	680
First-time	3,679	545.1	548	51.9	332	680
Retake	1,210	482.8	488	45.5	272	650
All 2012-13	4,950	524.0	524	54.0	302	674
First-time	3,631	539.0	548	51.0	302	674
Retake	1,319	484.0	488	41.0	314	632
All 2011-12	4,886	525.0	524	54.0	230	692
First-time	3,222	542.0	548	51.0	272	692
Retake	1,664	491.0	494	44.0	230	644
All 2010-11	5,711	490.0	494	67.0	200	672
First-time	2,963	508.0	517	71.0	200	672
Retake	2,748	470.0	476	56.0	220	624

Examination Form Reliabilities and Other Summary Data

The performance of the test forms used for the BOC certification examination and are consistent with reporting requirements for NCCA accreditation. Reliability is assessed by using Cronbach's alpha (Cronbach, 1951), a measure typically used for estimating overall examination form reliability; Brennan-Kane (Brennan & Kane, 1977), a measure used for estimating the decision consistency (i.e., the reliability of pass/fail decisions based on the test); and the standard error of measurement (SEM) presented in raw score units, a measure of the precision of the examination form.

SUMMARY

Statistics concerning the quality of the BOC certification examination as a measurement instrument indicate that the examination complies with psychometric requirements that pertain to certification and licensure tests. Notably, estimates of reliability and equivalence across forms for the various parts of the examination are acceptable. Likewise, candidate performance on all parts of the examination is consistent with the public protection mission of the BOC.

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