

NBME UPDATES

For Medical School and Student Services

April 7, 2017

NBME Basic Science Subject Examinations Timing and New Score Scale Change - Effective August 2017

Beginning in August 2017, the timing for the Basic Science subject examinations will increase as noted below. The time allocated to complete each item (item pacing) will increase. The total time allotted to complete each exam will increase so that the time per item corresponds to the time allocated to complete each item on USMLE Step 1. See the chart below for timing changes.

The number of items on the Basic Science subject examinations will remain the same.

Timing Changes

| Exam | # of Items | Current Total Session Time* | New Total Session Time* |
|---|------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Behavioral Science Biochemistry Gross Anatomy Histology Microbiology Neuroscience Pathology Pharmacology Physiology | 125 | 2 hours, 45 minutes | 3 hours, 23 minutes |
| Gross Anatomy + Embryology | 145 | 3 hours, 10 minutes | 3 hours, 53 minutes |
| Microbiology + Immunology | 150 | 3 hours, 15 minutes | 4 hours |

*Total session time includes an optional 15-minute tutorial.

New Score Scale, Score Reporting Changes, and Exam Fees

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|---|---|
| The New Equated Percent Correct Score Scale | <p>Similar to the rescaling of the Pathology exam, the new score scale for all Basic Science examinations will be an equated percent correct score. This new score will reflect an examinee's mastery of the content domain, calculated as a percentage of items in the total content domain that would be answered correctly based on an examinee's proficiency level. The scores are equated across test administrations and are statistically adjusted for variations in difficulty across examination forms. Consequently, these scores can be used to compare and track school and examinee performances over time.</p> <p>Similar to the old scores, the new equated percent correct scores will retain the usefulness of the previous subject examination scores as a tool for comparing the performance of a school's examinees with that of a large, nationally representative group taking the examination as an end-of-clerkship assessment.</p> |
| Score Feedback | All current score feedback will continue to be provided; the format of the feedback will remain the same, but will be updated to reflect the new equated percent correct score scale (except Pathology, which was previously updated as of March 1, 2017). |
| Exam Fees | The fees for all Basic Science subject examinations will remain the same. |

If you have questions, please contact us at subjectexams@nbme.org.