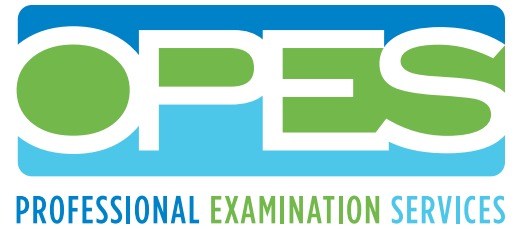


EXAMINATION DEVELOPMENT



Purpose

The purpose of licensing examinations is to protect consumers by verifying that new licensees possess the minimally acceptable knowledge and experience necessary to perform tasks on the job safely and competently.

Process

A valid occupational analysis (OA) and content outline is required to begin the examination development process. The content outline provides the specifications for the examination.

Examination development is a group process, conducted in structured workshops comprised of subject matter experts (SMEs). Each SME provides a different perspective of the profession that would not otherwise be objectively considered by individuals working alone. To ensure that the description of the profession represents the job tasks of practitioners entering the profession, each workshop always includes a number of newly licensed practitioners. While there may be several workshops to develop an examination, it is recommended that each be scheduled for a minimum of two days to obtain optimum results.

The types of workshops required may include such tasks as re-linking old items (questions) to a new OA content outline; writing new items linked to the outline; reviewing and revising new or poorly functioning items; constructing a new examination version; and determining a passing score.

During each workshop SMEs are trained in the technical, professional, and legal standards that serve as specific guidelines for the development of examinations. For multiple-choice examinations, incorrect options (distracters) in multiple-choice items should be plausible so that an unprepared candidate will seriously consider them with the correct answer (key). For performance examinations, the activities should be sufficiently complex that an examiner can thoroughly assess a candidate's competence to perform actual job-related tasks.

Validation

In order for an examination to be valid, it must be empirically linked to the content outline of a recent occupational analysis. See Informational Series No. 1, "Occupational Analysis" for more information.

Contact

To learn more about these and other examination-related services, please contact the Office of Professional Examination Services at (916) 575-7240.