



Understanding SMLE Scaled Score

What is a scaled score?

A scaled score is the total number of correct questions (raw score) that have been converted onto a consistent and standardized scale. For SMLE exam, the converted raw passing score equals 560 on a scale of 200 to 800.

In order to better understand how a raw score is converted to a scaled score, a familiar example: Converting pounds to kilograms. One pound equals 0.453 kilograms. The weight has not changed, only the way in which the data is being reported.

Scaled scoring is used as a best practice for reporting high stakes licensing exam scores to manage the potential differences in difficulty across unique forms.

Why use scaled scoring?

In order for a fair and consistent decision to be made on exam results, scores need to be comparable, meaning that scores from different forms of a test should indicate the same level of performance no matter which exam form a test taker has received. This will also take into account the potential variability in difficulty between unique exam forms. Though test developers adhere strictly to test specifications when developing multiple exam forms that are similar in difficulty, they are rarely equal in difficulty. Furthermore, percent-correct scores do not always represent a fair comparison of different forms.

How is the passing score set?

The passing score is established by multidisciplinary diverse taskforce through a standard setting exercise. During this process, a taskforce of subject matter experts discuss the minimum level of competence that is required for passing the examination. After evaluating and analyzing the difficulty of each question, as well as the minimal specific knowledge, skills and abilities that qualified practitioners possess a passing score is set.

How are differences between the previous SMLE (150 MCQs) and the current (300 MCQs) forms handled?

Test takers are assured fairness when form difficulty varies by a statistical process called equating. Equating procedures measure the difficulty of each exam form and adjust the passing score as needed so that the same level of candidate performance is reflected in the passing score regardless of the difficulty of the form.

How can I compare scores between SMLE (150 MCQs) and the current (300 MCQs)?

It is important to note that the SMLE exam has evolved in terms of test content, and that exams taken at two substantially different points in time may vary somewhat in terms of inclusion or emphasis of certain content areas. It is advised to avoid comparing scores that were obtained at different points in time because the content and format of each exam may have changed.

For postgraduate admission purposes a method outlining the SMLE (300) scaled score and its equivalent percentage from SMLE (150) will be posted on the SCFHS website in October 2017. Same concept applies to SNLE and SDLE.