



National Board of Medical Examiners[®]

Subject Examination Program

Score Interpretation Guide for Students

NBME[®] Comprehensive Basic Science Examination

The enclosed Performance Report lists your Subject Test Score on the Comprehensive Basic Science Examination and provides a Performance Profile to aid in self-assessment. The content covered on the Comprehensive Basic Science Examination (CBSE) is based on the United States Medical Licensing Examination (USMLE) STEP 1. The CBSE is basically a short, paper and pencil version of STEP 1 that covers material that is typically learned during basic science medical education. Subject Test Scores are scaled so that a score of 70 on the CBSE is approximately equivalent to a score of 200 on USMLE Step 1. The vast majority of scores range from 45 to 95, and although the scores have the "look and feel" of percent-correct scores, they are not. Because the Comprehensive Basic Science Examination and Step 1 cover very similar content, this scale provides a useful tool for comparing your performance with that of a large, nationally representative group taking the licensing exam at the end of the second year of medical school. Additional information about the relationship between CBSE scores and Step 1 scores are provided in the table below.

Precision of Scores

Your score is influenced both by your general understanding of the basic biomedical sciences and the specific set of items selected for this Comprehensive Basic Science Examination. The Standard Error of Measurement (SEM) indicates how far the score an examinee earns on the exam is likely to vary from the examinee's "true" proficiency level. The SEM is approximately 3 points for CBSE Subject Test Scores. Like the standard error for a diagnostic laboratory study, the SEM is expressed on the same scale as the test scores and can be used to construct confidence intervals around the scores. For example, if a student receiving a CBSE Subject Test Score of 60 were tested repeatedly with exams using different sets of items covering similar content, 95% of the scores received should fall between 54 and 66 (60 plus/minus two times the SEM of 3).

Approximate USMLE Performance Equivalents

The table to the right provides approximate performance equivalents for USMLE Step 1, making it possible for you to translate your Subject Test Score to the scale used for Step 1. *Specific information on Step 1 and the current minimum passing score is available on the web site for USMLE (<http://www.usmle.org>).*

To use the table, locate your Subject Test Score in the associated column and note the entry in the column headed "Step 1 Equivalent". For example, if your score is 62, the corresponding entry of 180 indicates that your performance on the Subject Test is approximately equivalent to a Step 1 score of 180.

Approximate Step 1 Equivalents

	Step 1		Step 1	
Score	Equivalent	Score	Equivalent	
≥ 94	≥ 260	68	195	
92	255	66	190	
90	250	64	185	
88	245	62	180	
86	240	60	175	
84	235	58	170	
82	230	56	165	
80	225	54	160	
78	220	52	155	
76	215	50	150	
74	210	48	145	
72	205	≤ 46	≤ 140	
70	200			