




## MEMORANDUM

<b>DATE</b>	February 16, 2021
<b>TO</b>	Rebecca Mitchell, Executive Officer Naturopathic Medicine Committee
<b>FROM</b>	 Tracy Montez, Ph.D., Chief Division of Programs and Policy Review
<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>Developing a State Licensing Examination</b>

The purpose of this memo is to introduce the process of developing a state licensure examination program. It should be noted that this process is lengthy and technical, requiring an open discussion for questions and clarification.

Licensing boards, bureaus, and committees within the California Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) are required to ensure that examination programs (i.e., state or national) used in the California licensure process comply with psychometric<sup>1</sup> and legal standards<sup>2</sup>. The Naturopathic Medicine Committee (Committee) requested that DCA's Office of Professional Examination Services (OPES) present the steps necessary to develop, administer, and maintain a fair, valid, and legally defensible examination program.

When developing a state or using a national examination, the following test program components must meet professional guidelines and technical standards: (a) occupational analysis (OA), (b) examination development, (c) passing scores, (d) test administration, (e) examination scoring and performance, (f) information available to candidates, and (g) test security procedures.

Each of these test components follows a robust psychometric methodology involving test specialists, program staff and subject matter experts (SMEs; active licensees who are in good standing). Figure 1 illustrates the cycle of examination development. The cycle shows that the process is ongoing, meaning that a bank of test items is constructed from which to construct new test forms. This prevents examinations from being overexposed. An OA should be completed every 5-7 years to support the examination forms.

<sup>1</sup> American Educational Research Association, American Psychological Association, and National Council on Measurement in Education. (2014). *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing*. Washington, DC: American Educational Research Association.

<sup>2</sup> California Business and Professions Code section 139

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In addition to this cycle, other components include how to administer the examination, information to share with candidates and security associated with all components of this process.

Regarding examination administration, DCA has a Master Contract with PSI to administer exams via computer-based test services at over 20 California test centers and dozens nationally. Many DCA boards and bureaus participate in this contract.

Costs to develop and maintain a state examination program can range from \$30,000-\$50,000, depending on size of regulatory program. OAs can range from \$25,000-\$75,000, again depending on various factors.

OPES would be happy to present and discuss additional information at a future Committee meeting.

### Attachments:

- Informational Series No. 1 Occupational Analysis
- Informational Series No. 3 Examination Development
- Informational Series No. 6 Integrated Examination Services Program
- Informational Series No. 10 Review of National Licensure Examinations

FIGURE 1. EXAMINATION DEVELOPMENT CYCLE

