

# EXAMINATION DEVELOPMENT

## PURPOSE

Licensure examinations protect consumers by ensuring 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 examination outline are required to begin the examination development process. The examination 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 might not otherwise be considered by individuals working alone. To ensure that the examination items (questions) reflect the tasks of practitioners entering the profession, each workshop always includes some 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 conducted may include such tasks as relinking old items (questions) to a new OA examination 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 licensure examinations. For multiple-choice examinations, incorrect options (distractors) should be plausible so that an unprepared candidate will seriously consider them with the correct answer. For performance examinations, the activities should be complex enough to enable an examiner to thoroughly assess a candidate's competence to perform actual job-related tasks.

## VALIDATION

For an examination to be valid, it must be developed with the participation of SMEs and empirically linked to the examination outline of a recent OA. 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.