



Comprehensive Clinical Science Examination

Score Interpretation Guide

NBME® subject examinations provide medical schools with a tool for measuring examinees' understanding of the clinical sciences. Although these examinations are designed to be broadly appropriate as part of overall examinee assessment, course objectives vary across schools, and the congruence between subject examination content and course objectives should be considered when interpreting test scores and determining grading standards. Specifically, subject examination scores should not be used alone, but rather in conjunction with other indicators of examinee performance in determination of grades.

Subject Examination Scores

The subject examination score is scaled to a mean of 70 and a standard deviation of 8. A Comprehensive Clinical Science Examination (CCSE) score of 70 is approximately equivalent to a score of 200 on the United States Medical Licensing Examination® (USMLE®) Step 2 Clinical Knowledge (CK). 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 CCSE and USMLE Step 2 CK cover very similar content, this scale provides a useful tool for comparing the scores of your examinees with those of a large, nationally representative group taking the licensing examination at the end of the second year of medical school. Additional information about the relationship between CCSE scores and USMLE Step 2 CK scores is provided in the table on the next page.

Unlike percent-correct scores, subject examination scores are statistically equated across test administrations. Scores are statistically adjusted for shifts in test difficulty across different forms of the examination. This makes it possible to track school and examinee performance over time.

Precision of Scores

Measurement error is present on all tests, and the standard error of measurement (SEM) provides an index of the (im)precision of scores. The SEM indicates how far an examinee's score on the examination might stray from his/her "true" proficiency level across repeated testing using different sets of items covering the same content. Using the SEM, it is possible to calculate a score interval that will encompass about two thirds of the observed scores for a given true score by adding and subtracting the SEM from that score. For this examination, the SEM is approximately 4 points. For example, if an examinee's true proficiency on the examination is 60, the score he/she achieved on the examination will usually (two times out of three) fall between 56 and 64 ($60 - 4$ and $60 + 4$).

Score and Performance Feedback

Summary information on the examinee group tested, examination purpose and number of items scored is provided on each page of the feedback. The Roster of Scaled Scores reports a total test scaled score for each examinee. Reported scores also appear in a comma separated text file that can be downloaded and used to export scores. An Examinee Performance Profile, which graphically displays content areas of strength and weakness, is provided for each examinee.

If there were at least 2 examinees, Scaled Score Descriptive Statistics for reported scores are provided along with a Frequency Distribution of the total test scaled score. If there were at least 10 examinees for a single form administration, a detailed Content Area Item Analysis Report is provided. Content area item descriptors and group item performance also appear in a file that can be downloaded. If there were at least 10 examinees for a single form administration or 20 examinees for a multiple form administration, a Summary Content Area Item Analysis Report is provided.

If there were at least 15 examinees, a School Summary Performance Profile, which graphically displays areas of strength and weakness in each major content area for your specific test administration, is provided.

An approximate USMLE performance equivalency table and current norms are attached. Previous norms can be found on the *NBME Services Portal (NSP)*.



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Subject Examination Program

Comprehensive Clinical Science Examination

Approximate USMLE® Performance Equivalents

The table below provides approximate performance equivalents for USMLE Step 2 CK, making it possible for you to translate the CCSE scores of your examinees to the scale used for USMLE Step 2 CK. *Specific information on USMLE Step 2 CK and the current minimum passing score is available on the USMLE web site at www.usmle.org.*

To use the table, locate an examinee's CCSE score in the associated column and note the entry in the column labeled "Step 2 CK Equivalent". For example, if an examinee's score is 60, the corresponding entry of 175 indicates that the examinee's performance on the CCSE is approximately equivalent to a Step 2 CK score of 175.

Note: This examination is not intended to predict performance on USMLE. Rather, it is intended to be used to determine an examinee's relative areas of strength and weakness in general topic areas.

Approximate Step 2 CK Equivalents			
CCSE Score	Step 2 CK Equivalent	CCSE Score	Step 2 CK 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	≤44	≤135



NATIONAL BOARD OF MEDICAL EXAMINERS®
Subject Examination Program

Comprehensive Clinical Science Examination

Norms for Examinee Performance

The table below provides norms to aid in the interpretation of examinee performance. These norms enable you to compare your examinees' subject examination scores with the performance of a group of examinees taking the examination at a similar stage of training. The norms reflect the performance of a reference group of examinees from LCME-accredited medical schools who took a paper or web version of this examination for the first time as an end-of-course or end-of-year examination, or for purposes other than as a makeup exam.

The number of schools, sample size (N), mean, and standard deviation (SD) of the norm group for each academic period are listed below. The academic year for clinical exams is defined as test dates between August 1st and July 31st.

Period	Academic Years	Number of Schools	N	Mean	SD
1	YYY1-YYY4	25	3,002	70	11
2	YYY4-YYY6	21	3,259	72	12

To use the table, locate an examinee's CCSE score in the associated column and note the entry in the column labeled "Percentile Rank". For example, if an examinee's score is 70, the corresponding percentile rank of 53 in Period 1 indicates that 53% of the national group of examinees taking this examination had scores at or below 70.

CCSE Score	Percentile Ranks		CCSE Score	Percentile Ranks	
	Period 1	Period 2		Period 1	Period 2
≥93	97	96	73	64	57
92	96	95	72	61	53
91	95	94	71	57	50
90	95	93	70	53	45
89	94	92	69	50	42
88	93	90	68	46	39
87	93	89	67	42	35
86	92	88	66	37	31
85	90	86	65	35	29
84	89	84	64	31	26
83	88	81	63	28	23
82	86	80	62	24	20
81	85	78	61	23	17
80	83	76	60	19	15
79	80	73	59	16	13
78	79	70	58	14	12
77	75	68	57	12	10
76	74	65	56	10	8
75	70	62	55	9	7
74	69	59	≤54	8	6



NATIONAL BOARD OF MEDICAL EXAMINERS®
Subject Examination Program

Comprehensive Clinical Science Examination

YYY6-YYY8 Academic Year Norms

The table below provides norms to aid in the interpretation of examinee performance. These norms enable you to compare your examinees' subject examination scores with the performance of a group of examinees taking the examination at a similar stage of training. The norms reflect the performance of a reference group of examinees from LCME-accredited medical schools who took a paper or web version of this examination for the first time as an end-of-course or end-of-year examination, or for purposes other than as a makeup exam.

The number of schools, sample size (N), mean, and standard deviation (SD) of the norm group for each academic period are listed below. The academic year for clinical exams is defined as test dates between August 1st and July 31st.

Academic Years	Number of Schools	N	Mean	SD
YYY6-YYY8	26	2,905	72.8	13.2

To use the table, locate an examinee's score in the column labeled "Scaled Score" and note the entry in the adjacent column labeled "Percentile Ranks". This number indicates the percentage of examinees that scored at or below the examinee's scaled score.

Scaled Score	Percentile Ranks	Scaled Score	Percentile Ranks
93 or above	94	73	52
92	93	72	48
91	92	71	46
90	91	70	42
89	90	69	39
88	87	68	37
87	86	67	33
86	84	66	30
85	83	65	29
84	82	64	25
83	79	63	22
82	78	62	20
81	75	61	19
80	72	60	16
79	70	59	14
78	66	58	12
77	64	57	11
76	61	56	9
75	58	55	9
74	55	54 or below	8