



EXAMINATION SCORE INVALIDATION

BACKGROUND

In the interest of maintaining the highest standards of integrity and fairness, ABEM has implemented a policy to address score invalidity on the Qualifying Examination (QE), Certifying Examination (CE), subspecialty and focused practice designation examinations for which a physician is eligible, and continuing certification examinations. ABEM reserves the right not to report a score, or to cancel a previously reported score, where it has good faith reason to believe the score is invalid (*i.e.*, that the score does not represent a reasonable assessment of a test taker's knowledge or competence as sampled by the examination).

The performance of all physicians is monitored and may be analyzed statistically to detect performance anomalies. Anomalies may include, but are not limited to, irregular answer patterns, similar response patterns between test takers, and/or statistical inconsistencies. Other information may also come to the attention of ABEM that raises questions about score validity, such as information regarding a physician's adherence to test administration guidelines. When anomalies or other information are identified that call into question an exam score, a thorough investigation is conducted to ensure the validity of the exam is upheld.

POLICY

ABEM reserves the right to take any necessary measures to protect the integrity of its examinations. ABEM reserves the right to withhold or cancel an examination score if it has a good faith basis for questioning the validity of the score. This decision does not imply any misconduct or testing irregularities on the part of the examinee, and ABEM is not required to make a finding of misconduct or testing irregularities before withholding or cancelling a test score based on validity concerns. ABEM may, however, conduct a separate investigation and take further action under the ABEM Examination Irregularities Policy and Procedures based on information it learns related to score validity.

ABEM may withhold the release of scores or cancel previously released scores if ABEM has a good faith basis to question the validity of the scores. The physician(s) will be notified in the event a score is withheld or cancelled.

The physician may be offered a retest depending on the conclusion of the above-noted investigation.

EXCEPTIONS

None.



EXAMINATION SCORE INVALIDATION PROCEDURES

PROCEDURES

These procedures apply to ABEM's investigation of and response to information related to the validity of scores on the Qualifying Examination (QE), Certifying Examination (CE), subspecialty and focused practice designation examinations for which a physician is eligible, and continuing certification examinations, pursuant to ABEM's Examination Score Invalidation Policy.

These procedures apply where ABEM questions the validity of a score as a reasonable assessment of a test taker's knowledge or competence as sampled by the examination.

ABEM staff will first evaluate any information presented regarding score validity and conduct further investigation as ABEM staff determines is appropriate. The Chair of the applicable examination committee will be notified immediately at the start of any further investigation that may include, but is not limited to, seeking additional information from the test-taker and/or other relevant parties.

If a question regarding score validity arises before a score is released, ABEM will notify the affected physician(s) that release of the score is delayed pending further review. The physician(s) will be given information regarding the basis for ABEM's concerns and 20 business days to provide a written statement in response to ABEM's concerns. Following the 20-day period, ABEM will review all available information and decide on whether to cancel the scores due to validity concerns or report them. This decision is final and cannot be appealed further.

If a question regarding score validity arises after a score has been released, ABEM will notify the affected physician(s) that it is considering cancelling the score, pending further review. The physician(s) will be given information regarding the basis for ABEM's concerns and 20 business days to provide a written statement in response to ABEM's concerns. Following the 20-day period, ABEM will review all available information and decide whether to cancel the scores due to validity concerns or continue to report them. This decision is final and cannot be appealed further.

Although ABEM will make every effort to withhold or cancel the scores of only those physicians with an identified concern about score validity, in some instances, the validity of the scores among one or more physicians may be in question. In such circumstances, ABEM reserves the right to withhold or cancel the scores of all identified physicians, and, if necessary (as determined by ABEM in its sole discretion), to require such physicians to take an additional examination under conditions set by ABEM.

Although a test invalidity determination does not involve a finding of misconduct or testing irregularities, ABEM may refer a test validity matter for further investigation pursuant to the ABEM Policy on Examination Irregularities.

These procedures are intended to apply to most instances of suspected score invalidity. ABEM reserves the right, however, to take different/additional actions or provide different procedures in the event the ABEM Board determines this is justified and reasonable based on a particular set of facts or circumstances.

APPEALS

None.
