

# TRENDS AND SOLUTIONS for Leaders in Credentialing

November 11-14, 2013 Omni Amelia Island Amelia Island, FL



## Score Reporting: More Than Just Pass/Fail

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## Overview

- Review professional standards
- Provide guidance on considerations for designing, developing, and reviewing a score report
- Review practices used by two credentialing programs in score report design, development, and review
- Review example score reports



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## Professional Standards

- NCCA
  - Specific standards that require defensible and sound processes for test development, administration, scoring, and score reporting.
- *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing*
  - Focusing test development and score use on intended purposes (validity)

## NCCA Standard 13

- *The certification program must document the psychometric procedures used to score, interpret, and report assessment results.*
  - Essential Element C: Candidates must be provided **meaningful information on their performance** on assessment instruments. Such information must enable failing candidates to benefit from the information and, if psychometrically defensible, understand their strengths and weaknesses as measured by the assessment instruments.
    - Commentary B: The certification program should publish an explanation of the appropriate uses and misuses of reported score information.



## NCCA Standard 14

- *The certification program must ensure that reported scores are sufficiently reliable for the intended purposes of the assessment instruments.*
  - Essential Element A - Certification programs must provide information to indicate whether scores (including any subscores) **are sufficiently reliable** for their intended uses, including estimates of errors of measurement for the reported scores. Information must be provided about reliability or consistency of pass/fail decisions. When appropriate, information should be provided about the standard error of measurement or similar coefficients around the cut score.

## Psychometric Interpretation

- Most Credentialing examinations are designed and built to make a criterion-referenced decision at the total test level
  - Focused measurement provides precision where we need it the most
  - Examples: Pass/Fail, Level 1 / Level 2 / Level 3
- Other information may not be meaningful in that it is not reliable, is this an afterthought?
- Determine what is appropriate to report for your program based on how it was developed



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## Intended and Unintended Uses

- Important to remember that users of the score reports have this information and may attempt to use it for purposes other than what the program intended
- Clearly define the intended uses to those end users [Standard 1] and information to support those uses
- Identify unintended (but likely) uses and caution end users against those due to lack of reliability/support.



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## Design Considerations

- Questions to consider at the design phase of your examination program
  - Who will have access to and be reviewing your score reports?
  - What are the intended uses of your test scores?
  - What do you perceive to be the unintended (but likely) uses of your test scores?
  - How will score reports be produced and distributed?





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## Decisions to Make

- What level(s) of information to provide
  - Total test information
  - Subscore information
- How to provide the information
  - Performance Level (e.g., Pass/Fail)
  - Raw Score
  - Scale Score
  - Graphic (subscore)



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## Review Considerations

- Are the overall results of the candidate's performance clear and understandable?
- Is the impact or decision(s) clear and understandable?
- Does the subscore performance information provide candidates with enough understanding of their relative strengths and weaknesses on the current form?
- Is appropriate cautionary guidance provided to limit the interpretations or uses of the score results to those that are intended by the testing organization?



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## CASE STUDY: NAWCO



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## WCC Program and Stakeholders

- Certification program acknowledging expertise in the area of wound care
- Candidates qualify to take the examination based on continuing education and experience
- WCC Stakeholders
  - Defined as the testing candidates & NCCA
  - Score reports are private
  - Not provided to employers, educators, etc.





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## What information should score reports include?

- What do stakeholders want?
- What do certification organizations feel comfortable sharing?



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## WCC Stakeholders Wants

- Overall score as a %
- Actual number correct/incorrect
- How they scored by section of the exam
- Ultimate goal: What to study in order to pass



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## Certification Organization Wants

- Provide useful info for test takers (with appropriate disclaimers)
  - Candidates to be able to correctly interpret score reports
    - Disclaimer 1

**Your test grade is based on your total performance on the WCC examination. This WCC examination contains questions organized into eight content areas. The table below identifies the name of each content area along with the approximate percentage of scored content on the examination that is related to this content area. Additionally, your score in each content area (percentage score) is provided so that you may better understand the relative strengths and weaknesses of your performance.**

## Certification Organization Wants

- Section level data provided
  - Candidates able to focus for re-exam
    - Disclaimer 2:  
**The information provided in this table is descriptive feedback only. It is not diagnostic and is not intended to predict future test performance. Decisions about candidate performance on this test (Pass/Fail) are based on the total score which is more reliable than any content area score.**



## Certification Organization Wants

- Testing candidates NOT able to compute actual scores
  - Don't list # items/subject area OR #correct-section level
  - Test is Pass/Fail
  - Employment issues: How Certified is ONE candidate over another?
- Accredited programs in compliance with NCCA Standards



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### **NAWCO Goals (based on all stakeholders input)**

- No test scores to be provided to candidates
- Candidates and employers NOT to be able to compute actual scores from reports
- Candidates provided useful information for re-exam preparation (with appropriate disclaimers)



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## NAWCO Goals (based on all stakeholders input)

- No exam cut scores to be posted in testing literature, on website OR on score reports
- Post info on website for prospective candidates –  
What to expect on score reports:
  - Info on how to interpret reports/disclaimers
  - Sample report
- Promote “PASS/FAIL” in certification



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## CASE STUDY: NCCPA





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## About NCCPA

- Independent, not-for-profit organization governed by a volunteer board including appointees from 13 other national organizations and public and PA directors-at-large
- NCCPA provides the only national certification program for physician assistants
  - Over 100,000 PAs certified since 1975



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## NCCPA Certification

- Eligibility is based on graduating from an accredited PA educational program (currently 181 PA programs<sup>1</sup>).
- Physician Assistant National Certifying Exam (PANCE)
  - MCQ exam administered year round throughout the country and some international sites (mostly military PAs)
- NCCPA certification is required for initial licensure in all states
- Certification maintenance includes passing a recertifying exam (changing from 6 to 10 years in 2014) and completing CME (including Self Assessments Performance Improvement Activities) every 2 years

<sup>1</sup>Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant, Inc.



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# NCCPA Stakeholders and Information Provided from PANCE

- Public
- Physician Assistants
- Physician Assistant Educational Programs
- State Medical Boards – Scores, pass/fail indications, certification status

NCCPA engages in continuous efforts to educate stakeholders on how the scores should/should not be used.

## Public – Web site search to determine if a PA is certified (no score information)

### NCCPA Purpose, Vision & Mission

The National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants is dedicated to serving the interest of the public. We do so with a passionate belief that certified physician assistants are essential members of the health care delivery team who provide millions access to more affordable, high quality health care.

Our vision is to transform the delivery of quality healthcare by certifying qualified PAs through programs that improve patient care while exemplifying a commitment to excellence unparalleled among certifying organizations.

Our mission is to serve the public through exemplary programs that evaluate critical PA competencies and that require the pursuit of life-long learning and improvement.

[Learn more about NCCPA...](#)

### What's New?

NCCPA honors unsung physician assistant heroes of recent American disasters for national PA week. [Read more.](#)

The screenshot shows a web form titled "Verify PA Certification". It features a search input field for "SSN or NCCPA ID". Below this is a section with two dropdown menus: "United States" and "Select a State", separated by an "OR" indicator. Further down are two input fields for "First Name" and "Last Name". At the bottom of the form is a prominent purple button labeled "VERIFY".





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## Physician Assistants

- Overall scale score, pass/Fail indication, content area feedback
- PAs are not provided with the actual cut score (percent correct needed to pass)
- Scores are capped at upper limit of 800 and lower limit of 200
- Content area feedback is provided to all candidates (regardless of pass/fail status) to help identify strengths and areas in which potential improvement can be made
- Disclaimers are provided about how to interpret and use the scores



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## State Medical Boards

- Information provided on demand through a secure portal designed specifically for state medical boards
- Information available:
  - Overall scale score
  - Pass/fail indication
  - Exam date
  - Certification status and expiration date



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## PA Educators

- Reports are available on demand through a secure portal
- Reports can be generated by calendar year or class
- Recently revised to include more graphics
- Information included:
  - Exam scores (individual students and group)
  - Content area feedback (individual students and group)
  - National comparative data (numerical and graphic presentations)
  - First-time taker passing trend lines for past 10 years



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## SUMMARY AND EXAMPLES



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## Summary

- Score reporting plans should be part of initial program design discussions
- All information pertaining to candidate performance should be interpretable, meaningful, and sufficiently reliable
- Intended interpretation of candidate performance information should be provided to discourage unintended uses
- Interpretive guidance for end users is critical





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# QUESTIONS?



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## Examples – Score Report Interpretation Guides

- [http://www.collegeboard.com/prod\\_downloads/counselors/hs/sat/resources/handbook/4\\_InterpretingScores.pdf](http://www.collegeboard.com/prod_downloads/counselors/hs/sat/resources/handbook/4_InterpretingScores.pdf)
- <http://www.actstudent.org/scores/understand/>
- [http://www.mtel.nesinc.com/PDFs/MTEL\\_Score\\_Report\\_Explanation\\_Web.pdf](http://www.mtel.nesinc.com/PDFs/MTEL_Score_Report_Explanation_Web.pdf)
- [http://www.ncarb.org/en/ARE/ARE-Portal/Score\\_Reports.aspx](http://www.ncarb.org/en/ARE/ARE-Portal/Score_Reports.aspx)