

What is a scaled score:

A scaled score is a representation of the total number of correct questions a candidate has answered (raw score) that has been converted onto a consistent and standardized scale. Scaled scoring is a certification industry best practice for reporting high stakes exam scores, used to account for the potential differences in difficulty across unique exam forms. For AMCB Certification exams, the converted raw passing score (scaled score) is 75 on a scale of 0 to 100.

Why use scaled scoring:

For fair and consistent decisions to be made on exam results, scores should be comparable. This means that scores from different forms of a test should indicate the same level of performance regardless of which exam form a candidate has received. This will take into account the potential variability in difficulty between unique exam forms.

Test developers adhere to strict test specifications when developing multiple exam forms to ensure that they are similar in difficulty. Because of the variability in difficulty of individual questions, though, the forms are rarely equal in difficulty and content coverage. For this reason, percent-correct scores do not always represent a fair comparison of different forms. For example, a candidate scoring 50% correct on a very difficult exam form would likely have more knowledge and skills than a candidate scoring 60% on an easier form. For the same reason, raw scores cannot be used, as two candidates with the same raw score on different forms would have demonstrated different level of performance relative to the difficulty of the individual exam forms. A scaled score provides a standard range for candidates and allows direct and fair comparisons of results from one exam form to another.

How is the passing score set:

The passing score is established by the AMCB Examination Pass Point Sub-Committee through a psychometrically valid, criterion-referenced, standard setting process (i.e., the Modified Angoff Method). During this process, a committee of subject matter experts discusses the minimum level of competence that is required for passing the examination and obtaining the credential. After evaluating and analyzing the difficulty of each question, as well as the specific knowledge, skills and abilities that qualified practitioners possess, a raw cut score, or the passing score, is set for that particular exam form. This becomes the standard for the program. As new exam forms are created, statistical equating is done to set the passing score for each exam form to account for any differences in form difficulty.

How are differences between test forms handled:

Candidates are assured fairness when form difficulty varies by a statistical process called equating. Equating procedures account for the difficulty of each exam form and adjust the passing score as needed so that the same level of candidate performance is reflected in the passing score regardless of the difficulty of the form. By using equating procedures, an equivalent passing standard for each form is maintained. Candidates who happen to take a slightly more difficult exam form are not penalized. Likewise, candidates who take the slightly easier exam form are not given an unfair advantage.

As an example, consider you have two exam forms, Exam Form 1 requires 88 correct items out of 125 to equal a scaled score of 75, and Exam Form 2 requires 90 correct items out of 125 to equal a scaled score of 75. Exam Form 1 is more difficult than Exam Form 2 because it requires fewer correct questions to achieve a scaled score passing score of 75. The minimum raw score passing score required to achieve a scaled score of 75 on Form 1 is not the same as the minimum raw score passing score required for Form 2. The raw score passing scores on each of these two forms, however, are reported as the same scaled score of 75.