



EDUCATION & SEMINARS

NBCE: Successful Reboot of Computer-Based Testing

Editor's Note: Article submitted by the National Board of Chiropractic Examiners.

On Jan. 12-13, 2019, the National Board of Chiropractic Examiners (NBCE) administered Part I to 1,245 examinees at 18 chiropractic colleges. From all reports, both examinees and administrators were impressed with the transition from a pencil-and-paper exam to the computer-based format.

Examinees Appreciate New Format

The NBCE has reformatted Part I and II exams. Previously, Parts I and II consisted of six individual subject-based exams. Each newly formatted global exam has 300 questions. Students taking the exam appreciated the half-day format.

"I was relieved that the exam was shortened with built-in and on-demand breaks," said one student. "I was able to stay locked-in and focused from start to finish." Another student commented, "My neuropeptides were challenged, not exhausted."

Partnering With Prometric in Shift to Computer-Based Exams

Several years ago, the NBCE saw the need to update its exam and move away from pencil and paper to a computer-based test. After exhaustive research, deliberation and some trial and error, the NBCE agreed to partner with Prometric, a global provider of computer-based testing and assessments.



Prometric has more than 22,000 employees, 300 clients and 100 million exams, including medical admissions and specialized licensing exams. The company delivers exams worldwide to professional, academic, government and corporate clients. It was clear that Prometric could deliver a secure exam.

"The NBCE saw the need to develop a high-quality computerized test, and our partnership with Prometric has more than delivered on the promise of long term solutions," said NBCE President Dr. Salvatore LaRusso. "This is the single largest accomplishment of the NBCE in decades."

Collaboration for Success

President John F. Kennedy said, "Success has many fathers." The NBCE collaborated with multiple groups to ensure success. For example, NBCE hired Igor Himelfarb to serve as in-house psychometrician. His job allows him to scientifically develop, interpret and score academic tests.

Chiropractic college representatives from across the country met with NBCE's written examination department in Greeley, Colo., to develop test questions for Part I and II. College professors and state exam board representatives met with NBCE staff for Part III test development. The collaboration only reinforces the NBCE's commitment to public safety and fairness in testing.

Continued Improvement

The computer-based exam is not the first change in testing at NBCE. In the fall of 2018, a new digital imaging test successfully launched as part of the Part IV exam. The new exam format uses a greater library of imaging for testing. Students really liked the new format. One student said, "Sitting at a computer screen while looking at high-quality images was much better than the old view box exam."

These new exams would not have been possible without combining strategic direction,

infrastructure changes and substantial monetary investments.

"The NBCE is a different organization today than it was in 2017," said NBCE's Executive Vice President, Dr. Norman Ouzts. "We are pleased with the new launch. The new format and greater opportunities to take the exam will help students transition into practice."

Dr. LaRusso added, "Our mission is to ensure professional competency through excellence in testing for the public and state boards. We are pleased with this step forward."

Editor's Note: [As documented in DC](#), the NBCE experienced two major technology malfunctions during administration of the written exam in 2016, forcing the board to suspend CBT. The January 2019 exam administrations mark the first time since then that the NBCE has provided computer-based testing instead of the pencil-and-paper format. For more information, please read "NBCE Fumbles Computerized Testing" in our [Sept. 1, 2016](#) issue and the NBCE's response ("National Board Apologizes for Testing Issues") in our [Nov. 1, 2016](#) issue.

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