

***Past Event: 2021 NCSBN REx-PN Conference - Standard Setting Transcript***  
©2021 National Council of State Boards of Nursing, Inc.

**Event**

Past Event: 2021 NCSBN REx-PN Conference

More info: <https://www.ncsbn.org/16034.htm>

**Presenter**

Hong Qian, PhD, Manager, Measurement and Testing, Examinations, NCSBN

Hello. I'm Dr. Hong. I will talk about standard-setting. How are the passing standard for REx-PN set? After this session, you will know why conducting standard-setting, how important it is, and how the passing standard for the REx-PN was set.

But first, what is standard-setting? It is a process of determining one or more cut scores on a test. If you are familiar with educational tests, they sometime classify students into three levels, basic, proficient, and advanced.

In this case, you need two cuts scores to classify students into three levels. But for licensure exam, we only need one cut to classify students into pass or fail. In July 2021, the registrar and the CEO of the British Columbia College of Nurses and Midwives, BCCNM, and the executive director

NE-

Passing standard is a cut point along the ability continuum that marks the minimum ability level requirement. If your ability is above the passing standard, you pass. If your ability is below or at the passing standard, you fail. I will use some terminologies in my presentation.

I will say cut score, cut point, passing standard, or pass mark. They all mean the same thing. For people who set standards, I will call them standard-setting panelists, standard-setting judge, or standard-setting subject matter expert. Why is standard-setting important?

If the standard is set too low, what will happen? Some candidates who are not qualified will be licensed. Do you want to be taken care of by those candidates? Probably not. As an educator, I understand that sometimes you wish the passing standard is lower so all your students can pass.

But we must keep public safety in our mind. What if we set the standard too high? High standard is good. If the standard is set too high, some candidates who are qualified will be denied a license, and we would not have enough nurses. We can't set the standard too low.

We can't set the standard too high. Our goal is to set an appropriate standard which accurately reflects the amount of nursing ability required to practice competently at entry level. Then, how are the passing standard for REx-PN set? Where does REx-PN cut score, -0.32, come from?

Here are the steps for setting the passing standard. One, select the panel of judges. We need people to do it. Two, define minimally competent candidate, which is a key concept when you set a passing standard. Three, train judges on the standard-setting method.

It's not like you just think about a number, there is a systematic way to do it. We need to train them so they understand what they are doing. Fourth, conduct a standard-setting workshop. This is a two-day workshop to set a passing standard. The final step is to establish the passing standard.

I will describe these steps one by one. First step, select the panel of judges. You know it is high-stake decision. Can you guess how many judges are needed? The answer is nine. Minimum of 9 judges are needed, but we had 12 in June 2021 standard-setting workshop.

Panel includes at least one faculty member. Panel includes at least one entry-level nurse with less than 15150.00





It's about -1 logit. For REx-PN, we have ratings from 120 items, so the vertical axis goes from 0 to 120. Base on the ratings from 9 judges or more, we draw the line down, it is -0.32 logits for REx-PN.

This is the passing standard recommended by the panel of judge. Then, the final step is to establish the passing standard. PNEC recommended the passing standard to the registrar and the CEO of BCCNM and the executive director and CEO of CNO considering two things.

Of course, the first thing considered is the passing standard recommended by the standard-setting panel. PNEC also considered candidate performance from field testing in 2020 and 2021. PNEC understands if you recommended this standard, how many would pass based on field testing data. We want PNEC to understand the impact of their recommendation.

Then, the registrar and the CEO of BCCNM and the executive director and the CEO of CNO approved the passing standard of -0.32 logits. Take-home message.

Standard-setting is a policy decision, and no true value exists. As a psychometrician, I like true value. Like, 1 plus 1 must be 2. Unfortunately, in standard-setting, there is no true value. Think about that. Are there true differences between -0.32 logits to -0.3199 logits? Not really.

Even though we do standard-setting in very rigorous way, there is no true value. Passing standard is related to mission of the organization and exam. For REx-PN, the mission is public protection. When we set the standard, we need to keep the mission in our mind. Standards should be revisited when test specifications, scope of practice, education programs, and/or other factors change.

When we change a test plan, we need to reevaluate the standards. Thank you very much. I hope the presentation is helpful to you. We will have a live Q&A coming up shortly. You can enter any questions you might have in the Q&A box, and we will answer them later.