



Revision of BOC Oral Exam

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Why Was the Exam Format Revised?

- # **The BOC received feedback from board members, candidates, panel members and provincial exam coordinators that there were inconsistencies developing across Canada in the examination process.**
 - # **It was perceived that these inconsistencies resulted in a candidate's success being dependent on the province where the exam is administered and/or who was on the panel, rather than their knowledge and aptitude for the profession.**
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Why Was the Exam Format Revised? Cont...

The Board of Certification identified this as an issue that needed to be addressed in order to ensure that the certification of public health inspectors is a fair and meaningful process and achieves the goals of the organization.

<http://www.ciphi.ca/pdf/bocexamconsistdisc.pdf>

<http://www.ciphi.ca/pdf/bocexamconsistrept.pdf>

<http://www.ciphi.ca/pdf/bocstrategicplan.pdf>

<http://www.ciphi.ca/pdf/bocexamconsistsummary.pdf>

What Changed?

- # 60% Pass for oral exam moved to 70%
 - # Marking By Consensus of Examiners
 - # Standardized Q and A format
 - # National Bank of Q and A's
 - # Exams Developed by Expert Panel
 - # BOC sets prompting levels
 - # Examiner Guidelines developed
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When Were the Changes Implemented?

- # **In April 2006 the new oral exam format was introduced across Canada**
 - # **The Board of Certification solicited feedback from the exam panels, and reviewed the marks**
 - # **The pass/fail rate was consistent with previous exams**
 - # **Further revisions were made based on the feedback received and applied to the Nov 2006 exam**
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What were the Oral Exam Marks in 2006?

PROVINCE	APRIL 2006		OCTOBER 2006	
MANITOBA	1/1 Pass	100 %	2/2 Pass	100%
NOVA SCOTIA	1/3 Pass	33%	4/5 Pass	80%
ALBERTA	4/8 Pass	50%	8/11 Pass	73%
NEW BRUNSWICK	0/2 Pass	0%	2/10 Pass	20%
NEWFOUNDLAND	1/1 Pass	100%	1/3 Pass	33%
BC	5/7 Pass	71%	14/25 Pass	56%
ONTARIO	16/23 Pass	70%	40/79 Pass	51%
SASKATCHEWAN	5/5 Pass	100%	2/4 Pass	50%
NATIONALLY	33/50 Pass	66%	73/139 Pass	53%

Why Was The Pass Rate So Low for the October 2006 Exam?

- # **The low pass rate may be due to any number of factors such as exam content, examiner error, candidate preparedness, practicum experience, examination “nerves”, skill and experience with oral exam situations.**
 - # **The BOC did a thorough review of the exam by breaking out the marks for both individual questions and each exam and looking for patterns that would suggest flaws in the examination.**
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Why Was The Pass Rate So Low for the October 2006 Exam ? cont...

- # **Examiners were also interviewed to eliminate the possibility that manifest error in the administration of the exam resulted in failing grades being awarded unjustly.**
 - # **There was no strong evidence to suggest the exam content or process was responsible for this unusually high failure rate.**
 - # **There was no evidence when compared nationally that any one of the four exams used was more difficult than the others**
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October Oral Exam Results

Province	Exam #1		Exam #2		Exam #3		Exam #4		Total	
	#Pass	%	#Pass	%	#Pass	%	#Pass	%	#Pass	%
Alberta					4/6	67%	4/5	80%	8/11	73%
BC					4/11	36%	10/14	71%	14/25	56%
Manitoba			2/2	100%					2/2	100%
Ontario	9/20	45%	9/19	47%	11/20	55%	11/20	55%	40/79	51%
Sask	2/2	100%			0/2	0%			2/4	50%
NB	2/6	33%	1/4	25%					3/10	30%
NFLD	1/3	33%							1/3	33%
Nova Scotia	2/3	67%	2/2	100%					4/5	80%
Overall	16/34	47%	14/27	52%	19/39	49%	25/40	63%	74/139	53%

Is Each Exam Designed to be the Same Degree of Difficulty?

- # **YES - The expert panel who develops and approves the exam questions takes this into consideration in order to ensure consistency**
 - # **The weighting of the questions both by content and degree of difficulty are the prime considerations of the panel**
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FAQ's

Q: Why doesn't everyone in Canada sit the same set of questions instead of several different ones.

A: Despite being asked to act in a professional manner and respect the confidentiality of the exam process, some candidates continue to pass on the questions to friends who sit the exam later in the day or in other time zones

FAQ's

Q: But aren't some of the questions the same anyway in all the exams?

A: Yes, there is a core set of common questions. Mixing the exams up helps but it is difficult to stay ahead of people are determined to act unprofessionally.

FAQ's

Q: Why Are 40% of the Questions on Food Safety?

A: The results the Oral Exam Consistency Project (<http://www.ciphi.ca/pdf/bocexamconsistrept.pdf>) indicated that, with few exceptions, this was the major work area for most employers of CPHI (C). Inspection activities ranked highest although activities related to education and HACCP were also significantly reported.

FAQ's

Q: Why isn't there at least one question per program area ?

A: This is simply not possible given the time allotted for the oral exam. However the major areas will be covered in each exam.

FAQ's

Q: Why aren't there questions that are specific to the Province the exam is held in?

A: This is a National Examination and designed to address entry level competencies of Public Health Inspectors. Knowledge of local issues, regulations, and policies that are of importance to employers should be addressed through the hiring process

FAQ's

Q: Why is the interaction limited between examiner and candidates?

A: Interaction and “prompting” has to be limited or consistency cannot be achieved across Canada. This is a common issue with oral exam processes. The April 07 exam format was adjusted to address this to the extent it can and still treat candidates equitably regardless of the exam location.

FAQ's

Q: Was it fair to introduce a new exam and a new marking process all at the same time?

A: The changes that were made to the exam format and the marking were intended to compliment each other and achieve some measure of consistency and fairness for the candidates.

FAQ's

Q: Why did the BOC change the passing grade from 60 % to 70 % based on the old exam results and apply it to the new exam? Why not wait to see what the pass rate was for the new process first?

A: The new passing grade was developed in conjunction with the new exam format and was not calculated based on previous pass or fail rates.

Passing Mark cont.....

- ✦ **The construction of a content valid exam includes the determination of what constitutes a defensible passing score . Therefore, this requirement formed part of the exam consistency project as the new format was being developed.**
 - ✦ **The consultants report provided a rationale and a recommendation to the BOC suggesting that at a minimum the pass mark be raised to 65%. (<http://www.ciphi.ca/pdf/bocexamconsistrept.pdf>)**
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Passing Mark cont.....

- # **In February 2006, this issue was debated at the Provincial Examiner Examination Consistency Workshop in Toronto**
 - # **The rationale for 65% was considered a conservative medium**
 - # **It was felt that employers use 70% as the standard for other venues such as interviews**
 - # **The exam coordinators voted in favour of 70%.**
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Passing Mark cont.....

- # **The BOC was presented a discussion paper and asked for a final decision.**
 - # **BOC voted in favour of adopting the Exam Coordinators recommendation.**
 - # **The expert panel has the mandate to consider the collective degree of difficulty of the exam questions and to ensure that at a minimum entry level candidates would be expected to achieve 70% of the required responses.**
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